NEWS / A10
Filipina reported kidnapped in Nigeria shows up with husband at NBI alive and well

ACROSS / A17
Bayan Muna member shot dead in North Cotabato

WORLD / A26
UN report: World faces severe food, water shortages by 2100

NEWS / A2
Palace admits troops deployment in Metro, provincial campuses

Lights out in 10 years for incandescent bulb

WASHINGTON—A COALITION OF INDUSTRIALists, environmentalists and energy specialists is banding together to try to eliminate the incandescent light bulb in about 10 years.

In an agreement announced Wednesday, the coalition members are pledging to press for efficiency standards at the local, state and federal levels.

LIGHTS, A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, March 15, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 96 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

SWS: GMA approval rating improves but still negative

HER APPROVAL RATING MAYBE IMPROVING but President Macapagal-Arroyo remains the country's most popular of four presidents since democracy was restored in 1986, an independent polling group said yesterday.

With nearly four of every 10 adult Filipinos (38 percent) satisfied with Ms Arroyo's performance and 43 percent dissatisfied, the President's net satisfaction rating stood at -5, a recent survey

SWS, 5/NAL A11

CLASS ACT Class 2007 of the Philippine Military Academy has three women in the top 10. Topping the class is Cadet Adrolee Mojica here being carried by female classmates. (Photo and names of the top 10 graduating cadets on Page A12.)

STORY, A12 AND A13

Woman No. 1 mistah of PMA Class 2007

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO CITY—FOR THE third time in 10 years, the valedictorian of the Philippine Military Academy's graduating class is a woman.

Cadet First Class Audrolee Mojica of Indang, Cavite, topped PMA Masigtas (Masagana sa Tagapagturo) Class of 2007. "It is an honor to represent the women of our country," she said.

Mojica, 23, intends to join the Philippine Navy after graduation on March 19. She is the third female PMA cadet to graduate as valedictorian since 1997, after Arlene de la

ROSARIO, A12

PMA cadets receive monthly stipend of P15,000 each

By Joselle dR Badilla
Inquirer Mindanao

MARCHING CLOCK 2007 OF ASIA'S PREMIER MILitary school is composed of 2000 members, of whom only 282 are tentatively listed to graduate on March 19.

The 282 completed their Officer's Preparatory Course (OPC) in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija, in the first week of this month.

Only 180 out of the 282 are original members of

PMA CADETS, A13

Drug use funding rebels

US admiral says 'shabu' labs in NPA, MILF areas

MILLIONS OF DOLLARS GENERATED BY DRUG USE MAY be finding their way into the hands of communist and Moro rebels in the Philippines, according to the head of a US antidrug task force unit in Southeast Asia.

Rear Admiral Paul Zukunft of the US Joint Inter-Agency Task Force-West said there were indications that secret laboratories for producing methamphetamine (shabu) were now operating in areas where Maoist and Moro rebels have a strong presence.

"That's one of our biggest concerns," Zukunft told Reuters during a break in meetings with Philippine counterparts at the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA).

He said a significant portion of revenues in drug trade was funding rebel activities.

"It's not just drug users. It's the revenues that are generated by drug use. We do know it's in the tens of millions of dollars and there's a very sophisticated money-laundering scheme that goes with that," Zukunft said.

The US government has been funding training and information exchange programs with countries in Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, to track where drugs are going and to stop them.

"It's much easier to stop them at the source than waiting for them to go into a global distribution," said Zukunft, who is based at the US Pacific Command headquarters in Hawaii.

Dionisio Santiago, a former Armed Forces chief of staff who now heads PDEA, said rebels were believed to have turned to the illicit drug trade because the global war on terrorism had cut foreign fund inflows to Islamic militants and communist rebels.

"We have been able to reduce the supply of

DRUGS, A8

TOO LATE TO EXIT Shortly before he was shot dead, Alexis Villegas opened a second-floor window while holding on to his .22 cal. pistol and a hand grenade. He was attempting to join a cop friend on the ground, who had offered to drive him away from the crime scene during the negotiations for the hostages' release.

Loren tops poll; Roco zooms up

NINE SENATORIAL CANDIdates on the opposition slate, six candidates on the administration ticket and two independent candidates would have a "statistical chance" of winning a seat in the Senate if elections were held in the first week of the month, according to a survey by Pulse Asia Inc.

Senia Roco (22.4 percent), Vicente Magsaysay (22.4 percent) and Michael Defensor (21.2 percent) were the new names that made it to the list of "probable

LOREN, A21

ELEKSYON 2007
Pulse Asia March 2007

RANK	SENATORIAL BETS	%
1	Legarda, Loren	68.38
2-3	Lacson, Panfilo	61.19
2-6	Pangilinan, Francis	59.88
2-9	Escudero, Francis	59.26
3-10	Drilon, Franklin	56.61
4-10	Villar, Manuel	54.99
4-10	Enrile, Jinggoy	54.58
4-10	Aquino, Benigno "Noynoy" III	54.24
4-10	Angara, Edgardo	53.10
5-11	Cayetano, Alan Peter	50.88
10-13	Recto, Ronaldo "Ronnie"	37.38
11-17	Trillo, Ricardo "Rico"	33.68
12-18	Pimentel, Aquilino "Koko"	32.18
12-18	Magsaysay, Vicente	32.48
12-18	Roco, Senia	32.48
12-18	Defensor, Michael	31.98
13-18	Cayetano, Pia	31.29
13-18	Madrigal, Cesar	31.10
19-23	Gordon, Richard	26.70
19-23	Osmeña, Sergio	25.80
19-23	Pichay, Roberto	25.61
19-23	Villanueva, Joseph	25.41
24-27	Escudero, Joseph	21.12
24-27	Ejercito, Jose "Erap"	20.92
25-29	Madrigal, Gloria	19.73
27-32	Osmeña, Serge	18.64
28-32	Pichay, Robert	18.24
28-32	Arroyo, Victor	18.14
28-32	Revilla, Ramon	17.95
28-32	Lacson, Gerardo	17.85
30-32	Lobregat, Oliver	17.65

SOURCE: PULSE ASIA, INC.
INQUIRER.NET, MAYA RODRIGO, JOSE BELTRAN

Cash, car ready for hostage-taker but . . .

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Julie M. Aurelio

THE P1.3-MILLION CASH HE HAD DEmanded was ready. So was the silver car he had intended to use for his getaway.

But little did Alexander Alfonso Villegas realize that the four hostages he had been keeping in a second-floor room of the Taguig City Justice Hall since Tuesday had slipped away.

When the 43-year-old ex-Marine and movie stuntman finally stepped out of the room to look for them yesterday, a police SWAT team waiting at the corridor opened fire, ending a 22-hour hostage drama in a blaze of gunshots and a grenade explosion.

"Thank God, the crisis is over," said Philippine National Police Director Reynaldo Varilla as Villegas lay lifeless on the floor, his thighs shattered by the grenade blast, which also pierced his face and body with shrapnel.

"We exhausted all means to peacefully resolve the crisis, to make sure nobody will get hurt. But we cannot avoid what happened," added Varilla, head of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO).

The four hostages—a lawyer and three women—were all rescued. Villegas' live-in partner, who was with him during the hostage drama, has been taken into police custody.

No one among the heavily armed members of the Special Weapons and Tactics was hurt.

It was not immediately clear if Villegas

CASH, A14

COMIC RELIEF: An angry Manuel Accera Po aka Fernando Po and Lapu-Lapu Ferdinand Jr. barges in on the Senatorial Forum at the Manila Hotel and confronts moderator Ruben Romualdez (center) for not inviting him.

'Fernando Po' perks up ho-hum election debate

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Norman Bordadora

NO SPARKS FLEW AT THE much-hallyhooed first public debate between administration and opposition senatorial candidates.

The only memorable part of the

FERNANDO, A10

RP activists testify for US Congress HR hearings

WASHINGTON—AS THE NUMber of activists murdered in the Philippines rises, Bishop Elmer Bactas says no one can feel safe when speaking out about political matters in his country.

Bactas, in testimony prepared for a congressional hearing Wednesday (today in Manila), said more than 800 activists are estimated to have been killed since 2001, when Gloria Macapa-

RP ACTIVISTS, A18

Second FRONTPAGE

PCSO 4D DRAW RESULTS
12 27 | 3 6 9 4
6 2 2 | 6 5 8
MEGALOTTO 6/45
9 11 18 27 34 45
P5,133,105.00

WEATHER FORECAST
FORECAST: Mostly sunny over most of the country. Partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms in Mindanao. Partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers over the rest of the country.

Reservists join urban patrol

By Kristine L. Alave

THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES announced yesterday it was expanding its counterinsurgency and peace and order operations in the capital with the deployment of 5,000 reservists to reinforce soldiers deployed in urban slums.

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, commanding general of the National Capital Region Command, said the reservists would participate in the AFP's civil-military program to thwart Muslim, Communist and Filipino terrorists in the capital.

Dolorfino's announcement coincided with a news briefing by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita during which reasons by leftist groups about military presence in the capital in the absence of a martial law declaration were raised.

"We will remind the AFP to pull out the troops as soon as possible because their presence is becoming too obvious," Ermita said in Filipino. "I'm sure the AFP leadership will reconsider," said Ermita, the former general and AFP chief of staff.

Dolorfino, who issued the order for the deployment of reservists on Saturday, said their primary duty under the Metro-Manila Patrol program was to help in disaster preparedness and prevention programs in their communities. He added that reservists who are lawyers and doctors would provide free legal assistance and medical examinations to urban slum residents.

He said the reservists would augment the 26 military troops assigned to 260 personnel fielded to patrol and engage in anti-leftist information campaigns in poverty-stricken areas in Metro Manila under the military's Community Development program.

"Yes, it's a mere program. They are mutually supportive," Dolorfino said.

The military's presence in the urban areas has been assailed by leftists and human rights groups who say the practice harks back to the martial law period and to "saturation drives" and intimidation campaigns by retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, blamed by a fact-finding commission for illegal extrajudicial executions in the regions where he had been assigned.

Renato Reyes, secretary general of left-wing Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, said the AFP was militarizing the urban areas and sweeping out members of progressive groups in the "guise of civic action."

He said armed soldiers had been urging residents not to vote left-wing party-list organizations.

But Dolorfino said the military has "noble intentions" in its deployment of reservists. He added that the military has a duty to conduct outreach programs to civilians—a move welcomed by some residents in crime-ridden slum districts.

"This is really a harmless approach. We are not targeting certain people. We are targeting problems," the official noted.

Dolorfino said the military reasons civic-conducting education campaigns to eliminate "bad ideas" in the communities. He said he was hopeful that the military's consideration initiative would strengthen the public's support for the Armed Forces.

AFP chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. has said that the soldiers deployed will be unarmed. He says that the military personnel are directed to arrest criminals, drug dealers and communist rebels suspected to be hiding in some areas in the city. With a report from Michael Lim Ubac

2 LP factions told to submit papers

THE COMMISSION ON ELECtions yesterday gave the two feuding factions of the Liberal Party to submit position papers on their party's constitution so the Supreme Court can determine which of the factions was legitimate.

The Comelec gave the rival factions led by Sen. Franklin Drilon and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza two days to submit evidence to show that certain amendments to the LP charter, also called the Saloma Constitution, had indeed been ratified.

The Comelec said that if it did not receive the evidence in two days it would be presumed that the amendments to the LP charter had not been ratified.

"It is the party's charter that mediated when the LP was led by former Senate President Jovito Salonga.

Drilon claimed that amendments which he and Northern Samar Gov. Raul Daza sponsored were ratified by LP members, which allowed him to succeed Rep. Florencio Abad as president in July 2006 when the latter was named education secretary.

Atienza, who leads a rival faction, contends however that the terms of Drilon and other party officials had expired in July 2005. He called party members in a convention in March 2006, and was elected vice president. Jerome Aning

Palace admits 'culture of corruption'

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG OFFICIALS YESTERDAY ACknowledged that "a culture of corruption" was prevalent in the country but that the Arroyo administration has been taking significant steps to fight the scourge in the bureaucracy.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo, presided at a press briefing yesterday to comment on a survey released on Tuesday by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (Perc) saying foreign businessmen regarded the Philippines as Asia's most corrupt economy.

Ermita and Saludo said it was a matter of perception versus reality, insisting that the situation on the ground was not that bad, and that there has been much improvement.

"There are other surveys of other agencies showing improvement in the Philippines. The Arroyo administration has something to brag about ... to prove that in spite of destabilization, our ship of state is on course," said Ermita.

Bunye said that compared to its predecessors, the Arroyo government "has undertaken a strong and steady effort to curb graft through criminal justice, administrative measures and procedural reforms."

Bunye pointed to the records of the ombudsman's office like Office of the Ombudsman, Sandiganbayan and the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission which "are there for all to see."

"And they certainly reflect an earnest effort by a government not to make a deep dent on corruption to drive greater confidence in our political and economic stability," he said.

Bunye explained that the government's anticorruption drive was focused on three areas — graft prone revenue agencies such as the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs, agencies that are on the front line of day to day public services, and local governments with their vast resources as the "war of the anti-corruption realm in the past."

"Results have been gained and reforms are being made although our realize that the Philippines has to deal with negative perception that are still rooted in the past," Bunye warned.

He said the culture of corruption "is something that had "crept into several areas of Philippine society and politics over many decades."

Saludo said that much of the perception that the Philippines was more corrupt than other countries was because of the freedom enjoyed by Philippine media.

He said perceptions were affected by what the media reported.

He noted that China and Vietnam, where media was subject to tight censorship, fared well in the survey.

"There in our country, the media is free to report everything that's happening," he said.

Ermita told this to Senate Ombudsman and Judge Adolfo Azcuna before "how things are in the Philippines," citing Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Donald Dee who said that the "situation is not that bad ... and they can see improvements."

Ermita and Saludo cited past surveys by the Social Weather Stations and other polling agencies showing that the corruption index went down dramatically from 2000, when President Joseph Estrada was in power.

"You go back to the previous administration if you can find a list in terms of high-officials ranked in a year," said Saludo.

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El Niño on way out, but here comes La Niña

THE SWELTERING EL NIÑO WEATHER pattern has receded, but in the tide, La Niña, might return and affect the Philippines, a senior meteorologist said yesterday.

"El Niño is gone as shown by the return to neutral conditions in the Pacific Ocean," Nathaniel Cruz, head of the weather branch of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, told Inquirer by phone.

Cruz, however, said his office was monitoring the possible development of the anti-thesis (a Niña weather) pattern in the next two to three months as suggested by other international meteorological centers.

Last week, the US Climate Prediction Center of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration said La Niña conditions in the equatorial Pacific in the next two to three months.

"It is over 100 percent definite that La Niña will come to after El Niño," Cruz said, adding the Philippines was in the midst of its summer which ends in mid-May to early May.

About 20 typhoons hit the Philippine archipelago each year, mainly during the rainy season that usually starts in late May and normally lasts until September. Reuters

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Open Access & Greater Retail Competition in the Power Sector

The Consumer & Oil Price Watch (COPW) met with President Arroyo, ERC Chairman Rodolfo Albano, and Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla to discuss proposals that will enable the Philippines to attract more local and foreign investors in the power sector so that ALL will benefit from lower electricity rates on January 2008 - especially the poor.

PSALM to fast-track privatization schedule in 2007 & 2008 under the EPIRA Law for open access by 2008

The Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) mandates retail competition and open access three years after its effectivity in 2001.

Open access that should have been enjoyed by consumers since 2004 **has been delayed for three years now** because these 2 preconditions have not been met:

PRECONDITION 1: ***The privatization of 70% of NPC owned & operated plants totaling 5,318 MW rated capacity.***

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) has already privatized or sold **480 megawatts** (MW) of NPC owned & operated plants.

This year, PSALM will auction off **2,724 MW** in the first semester and an additional **1,500 MW** in the second semester.

This will bring up the total of privatized assets to **4,713 MW** or **81%** - exceeding the **70% requirement** of NPC generating capacity of **5,318 MW** under the EPIRA Law.

January - June Auction Dates	
Calaca 1 & 2	600 MW
Masinloc 1 & 2	600 MW
Bataan Thermal	225 MW
Manila Thermal	200 MW
Tiwi Geothermal	275 MW
Makban Geothermal	410 MW
Angat Hydro	246 MW
Ilijan 1 & 2 Diesel	114 MW
Cebu 2 Diesel	54 MW
TOTAL:	2,724 MW

July - December Auction Dates	
Sucat Oil Thermal	850 MW
Mirant 1 & 2 Diesel	310 MW
Palinpinan Geothermal	192.5 MW
Tongonan Geothermal	112.5 MW
Bohol Diesel	22 MW
General Santos Diesel	22 MW
TOTAL:	1,500 MW

COPW's position is for the power generation sector to first be DE-MONOPOLIZED and an independent IPP administrator must be established in order to ensure fair market competition.

PRECONDITION 2: ***The transfer of management and control of at least 70% of the total energy output of NPC plants with IPP (independent power producer) contracts to IPP administrators, under Section 51c of the EPIRA Law.***

PSALM is empowered to take title to and possession of the NPC-IPP contracts and, **after public bidding in a transparent and open manner**, appoint qualified independent entities to act as IPP administrators that will manage and control the NPC-IPP plants until their contracts have expired.

In October 2004, PSALM has hired an ADB-funded consultant to recommend terms and conditions for the bidding of would-be IPP administrators.

THE ISSUE OF REGULATORY LAG OR DELAYS IN THE PROCESS OF APPROVING RATE ADJUSTMENTS MUST BE ADDRESSED WITH FINALITY

The Supreme Court order of stopping the automatic adjustment in the generation charge of NPC, TRANSCO, & Power Generators which are merely pass-on charges causes "**traffic jams**" as monthly petitions for price adjustments upwards or downwards must go through the process of publication and public hearing.

The Supreme Court has **singled out** MERALCO from implementing the **automatic monthly** adjustment of the generation charge while **other** distribution utilities **are allowed**.

COPW, in its letter to ERC Chairman Albano on January 15, expressed the need to address this concern in light of MERALCO's claim for cumulative under-recoveries totaling **P13.73 billion** as of January.

COPW met with MERALCO officials and asked that the **under-recoveries be staggered into 12 equal monthly installments** with a carrying charge equivalent to the 91-day T-Bill rate plus 300 points.

COPW is awaiting the letter of the DOE that will shorten the regulatory lag that is acceptable to the ERC without seeking the permission of the Joint Congressional Power Commission.

COPW appeals to PSALM, DOE, NPC, ERC, DOF, & the Office of the President to fast track compliance with the 2 preconditions in the EPIRA Law.

This will ensure TRUE market competition in the power sector and faster power rate reduction for ALL -Industrial, Commercial & Residential but MOST OF ALL THE POOR who enjoy a subsidy on the first 100 kwh consumption and may enjoy an increased subsidy of 200 kwh in 2008.

For online posting of COPW issues, log on to **http://groups.yahoo.com/group/COPW/**

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It's a go for Cesar Montano

By Cynthia D. Balana

AFTER ALMOST A WEEK OF SPECULATION about his possible withdrawal from the senatorial race, popular actor Cesar Montano announced yesterday he has decided to stay on as a candidate with the administration's Team Unity.

In a press conference at Acuzar's Barbecue in Quezon city, a teary-eyed Montano admitted that he had considered withdrawing from the slate but changed his mind after his teammates dropped in to lend his ear once again, and his family boosted his morale.

"Hindi ito sili-desisyon. Nakapagsalita ako dati. Nagsalita na rin ako ng Team Unity (I will not drop [that I was considering withdrawing]. But I have had time to think the other members of Team Unity boosted by morale)," he said, referring to the posture of all Team Unity candidates of dropping in unity to bankroll his campaign after learning of his financial constraints.

He did not say how much, but said it was enough for him to realize that he was part of a team and a concerned citizen. He also believed reports that Mikhail Gorbachev had promised him P200 million to join the team.

"Whatever happens, with or without money, I will not turn back," Montano said to Tagalog.

Asked if his meeting with the President last Monday had something to do with his decision to continue his senatorial bid, Montano said the President was always a big factor, but that it was his wife, actress Sunshine Cruz, and his family who got wished him the most boost.

It's okay if I don't win, I'm not trying to be a hero but my sanidad has many immediate problems. My own problem with the TV ads, that's just a material problem. This is a Team Unity in a real sense. There is solid commitment. They want. I had problems and they helped me," he said in Tagalog.

Still, Montano could not hold back his shock over the amount of money being spent in local political campaigns. If he had his way, he quipped, he would just donate that kind of money to a charitable cause.

Earlier, Montano complained of lack of funds to support a television ad campaign which could cost some P30 million. He realized he spotted the TV ads to generate sentiment among voters that he was a sentimental candidate and not just the entertainer-guest in the rally.

NEWSBRIEFS

Koko's Mindanao Agenda

TALK A FREE AND LASTING PEACE AGREEMENT BETWEEN REBEL groups and the government can spur growth in Mindanao, opposition senatorial candidate Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III said on the dot.

"This is a road less traveled by most island regions in all aspects. Yet shooting wars never the casualties are all Filipinos — soldiers, rebels and civilians. That is the reason investments are few," said Pimentel, the lone opposition candidate in the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan ticket promoted by Mindanao Agenda.

"The people of Mindanao are craving for peace, economic growth, education and jobs. They should be given opportunities to achieve these," he said. It is the duty of the administration candidates to make initiatives in Mindanao, such Pagtiis accomplishment and development, he said.

Pimentel said that once elected to the Senate, he will focus on seeking legislation to bring economic growth to Mindanao.

Sotto cites Senate record

ROBBING HIS FOES YESTERDAY DURING AN UNRUN OFFICE ALLEGATIONS double-standard between the Senate Majority and minority was evidently done, resulting from unrelenting rumors of blackmail and entertainment.

Telling his record as a senator, Sotto said the only real "blackmailing and is a thought although at disseminating the record of my public service letter to the Senate and of the total governmental work." He said his detractors have resorted to this tactic for lack of substance in a program to effect his term in a press statement.

Sotto underscored that he was the founder and lieutenant of the Kilusang Lingkod ng Pilipinas, where he was also mayor of Quezon City. The achievement, he said, required serious political leadership.

Sotto also said his work in the Senate involved pieces of legislation that authorize extensive efforts at getting the consensus of other legislators. He added that that he was the principal author of the Barkan on Optical Media, which sought to curb piracy in the country, and the bill that enabled qualified Filipinos abroad to vote. He said he also authored legislation which founded the telecommunications value-added technology, or e-commerce, and was another term century in the country.

"I would hope for the records. I did not merely look in the headlight," Sotto said.

GO presents 10-point economic plan

KEMPED HALFWAY INTO THE CAMPAIGN, the Genuine Opposition yesterday unsummoned its official economic platform which includes more job generation, cheaper power and medicine and lower taxes.

The GO, assured by President Macapagal-Arroyo as looking to platform, presented its 10-point economic program to keeping with its campaign slogan to anti-corruption fight-record and ideology.

GO also vowed to block any attempt to amend the Constitution by whatever mode.

Based on its platform, GO will sponsor and support legislative measures that would generate more jobs through labor-intensive infrastructure projects in the rural areas, increased budgetary allocations for education at all levels, substantially lower the cost of electricity, lower the costs of hospitalization and power through the development of domestic sources of renewable energy, reduce taxes on fuel and improve tax administration, grant presidential powers to the Commission on Human Rights and de-emphasize the harsh, military approach in counter-insurgency, contribute to the arrest of global warming, organize additional support programs for overseas Filipino workers, reinforce the role of the press in watching against graft and corruption by, also instead of long titled and increasing penalties for basic duty to more persons, and institute other meaningful economic reforms.

Dona Z. Pazzibugan

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Board of Foreign Service Examinations of the Department of Foreign Affairs announces the holding of the –

FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER (FSO) EXAMINATION

to recruit candidates for appointment to the position of Foreign Service Officer Class IV (FSO IV).

The Examination is composed of three (3) parts which will be held on the following dates:

Qualifying Test:	6 May 2007
Written Examination:	22, 23 and 24 August 2007
Oral Examination:	To be determined at a later date

IMPORTANT:

(1) Application forms and relevant information regarding the examination may be downloaded from the Department of Foreign Affairs website (**www.dfa.gov.ph**). Forms may also be obtained personally or requested through mail from the following offices of the Department of Foreign Affairs:

DFA Main Office: Board of Foreign Service Examinations, Department of Foreign Affairs, DFA Building, 2330 Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City ° Tels. (02) 834-3080, 834-3083 ° Fax (02) 551-5976

DFA RCO Lucena: 3rd Floor, Pacific Mall Lucena, M.L. Tagarao St., Barangay III, Lucena City ° Tels. (042) 710-4526 ° Fax (042) 373-1898 ° Email: dfarcolc@pldtdsl.net

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DFA RCO Clark Field: Balikbayan Shopping Mall, Claro M. Recto Avenue, Clarkfield, Angeles, Pampanga ° Tels. (045) 599-7777 ° Fax No. (045) 599-6555 ° Email: pampanga@dfa.gov.ph

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DFA RCO Legazpi: 4th Floor, LCC Expressmart Building, Rizal Street, Legazpi City, Albay ° Tels. (052) 480-3000, 820-3396 ° Fax (052) 480-1773 ° Email: admin@dfalegazpi.bayandsl.ph

DFA RCO Tacloban: Leyte SMED Center, Capitol Site, Sn. Enage, Tacloban City ° Tels. (053) 523-0080, 321-8233 ° Fax (053) 321-8237 ° Email: taclobansco@dfa.gov.ph, dfa_reotac@globelines.com.ph

DFA RCO Tuguegarao: Municipal Building, Tuguegarao, Cagayan Valley ° Tels (078) 846-4813, 846-1482 ° Fax (078) 846-2310 ° Email: tuguegarao@dfa.gov.ph

(2) Application forms may also be obtained from the Regional Offices of the Civil Service Commission.

(3) Completed application forms together with the documentary requirements must be returned to any of the DFA Regional Consular Offices enumerated above not later than **20 April 2007**, or to the DFA Main Office not later than **25 April 2007**, for evaluation and processing.

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Drugs funding rebels, says US admiral

Front page A1

methamphetamine in Manila because of the value of drug busts to crowd-chasing law enforcers of the capital since 2001," Stallings said.

MILF area

"But, we've been getting reports now (that) (the) syndicates were letting out (to) interest rates to (the) Hizbullahs...near the hideouts of Muslim rebels," he said.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the largest Moro rebel group in Mindanao, controls the vast wetlands in Central Mindanao where other Islamic militant groups are known to be taking shelter.

The shortage of methamphetamine supply has increased demand for marijuana, cultivation of the assistance in the southern Philippines, according to Stallings.

He said confiscated Dire People's Army (NPA) rebels were known to be controlling and protecting huge marijuana plantations in areas where they operate.

ZUKUNFT

"We will don't have an inkling of how much money the NPA gets from marijuana proceeds in their identified protectees," Stallings said.

He said the place was now reported to traffic Malaysia, Taiwan and Japan although domestic consumption was increasing.

Abu Sayyaf, too

The small militant group Abu Sayyaf, known to have links with Jemaah Islamiyah and al Qaeda, has also started cashing in on the drug trade, controlling traffic of smuggled drugs from its base in Jolo.

Santiago described Jolo as the country's main gateway to ingredients in making methamphetamine to secret laboratories in the Muslim Mindanao region.

Precursor chemicals for making methamphetamines, popularly known here as "shabu" were smuggled through Jolo from Qatar by low huge international cling steps from the Taiwan and mainland China.

Another popular substance, called ketamine, used commonly as an anesthetic in the horses, was also smuggled from India by local processing, and re-exported to Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan.

"It's not popular here yet because ketamine is expensive," Santiago said, adding the drug, also known as Kit Kat or Rhesus K, was popular among middle-level customers in metabolic or rave-in.

Reuters

IN THE KNOW

What Went Before

IN JULY 2001, PRESIDENT ARROYO... Arroyo announced members of the communist New People's Army of growing resistance to finance their rebellion after international funding had dried up. Following the US and European Union's decision to put a new rebel group, the group...

In [illegible] Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency [illegible] ...

In April, "Red Sept." Report, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, confirmed that the military and police were the ones engaged in the illegal drug business. He, however, offered no evidence.

Previous raids on marijuana plants [illegible] ...

Cont'd...Ritualistic, Satanic Rituals

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Lights out in 10 years . . .

Front page A1

The standards would phase out the ordinary screw-in bulb, technology that arose around the time of the telegraph and the steam have motion, and replace it with compact fluorescents, light-emitting diodes, halogen devices and other technologies far more energy-efficient.

Compact fluorescents are three times as effective as old-fashioned bulbs, and light-emitting diodes six times as efficient. There also are touch lamps.

The coalition members include Philips Lighting, the largest manufacturer; the Natural Resources Defense Council and two efficiency organizations.

Last Friday, European Union leaders said that European homes, offices and streets would have to use energy-efficient lighting by the end of the decade.

The decision to order a massive switchover that will affect the lives of all the EU's 490 million citizens came as a summit of the 27 nations also as part of an ambitious green energy policy to fight climate change.

4 billion sockets

But while they will use much less to run, they are more expensive to purchase, and getting Iconic users to change the bulbs in the environment. 4 billion sockets in the United States would probably require dismantling the choice.

James E. Rogers, chief executive of Duke Energy, said: "Encouraging our customers to use advanced compact fluorescent light bulbs and other easy-to-use lighting is fundamental to our plans to meet growing demand in a cost-effective, environmentally responsible."

The agreement is a compromise among the participants. Some favored an outright ban on incandescent bulbs, like the one that have to do and last month it would seek by 2009 or 2010.

Australia last month said it will be the world's first country to ban incandescent light bulbs in a bid to curb greenhouse gas emissions, announcing it would phase them out within three years.

Philips has pledged with other leading businesses in Europe to seek ambitious standards for lighting by 2020.

The Washington announcement will consult coalition members to seek "a market plan on" by 2010.

General Electric has been campaigning against the introduction of incandescent bulbs, and spending [illegible] to bring out a new model [illegible] is efficient as its current bulbs.

EU has allied itself with the General Electric [illegible] ...

Environmentalists in another group called the US Carbon Action Program, which seeks to control emissions of greenhouse gases through energy conservation.

Power in homes, office

Replacing incandescent lamps could slow the growth in greenhouse gas emissions, but not curb[illegible].

The EU leaders asked the executive European Commission to come up with proposals for [illegible] ... and a ban on [illegible] by 2008 and in homes by 2009.

The decision is a potential business opportunity for manufacturers such as Philips and Siemens-owned Osram, but skills [illegible] incandescent complaints about EU meddling in citizens' lives.

The commission sees a ten per of increasing energy efficiency to save 20 per cent of the EU's energy consumption by 2020 compared to projections.

First in world

Incandescent lamps are traditional light bulbs which use of filament.

The European decision prompted a flurry of jokes including this from a British BBC radio reporter: "How many EU leaders does it take to change a light bulb. Answer: 27."

Reuters, AFP

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The GSIS scholar—your scholar—is entitled to up to [illegible] ... per semester and a monthly stipend of P 1,000.00.

You must [illegible] ... or exactly 5:00 PM [illegible] ... on May 2, 2007. Please mail your [illegible] ...

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, March 15, 2007
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Jer 7:23-28
Gospel: Luke 11:14-23

One day Jesus was driving out a demon. When the demon had been driven out, the man previously could speak, and the people were amazed. Yet some of them said, "He drives out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the chief of the demons." To others wanted to put him to the test by asking him for a heavenly sign.

He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every nation divided by civil war is on the road to ruin, and will fall. A house divided by feuding is coming to an end. How can you say that I drive out demons by calling up Beelzebul? If I do by doing so by Beelzebul, by whom do your children perform their exorcisms? Then will be your judges them.

"But suppose I drive out demons by the finger of God, you know that means that the kingdom of God has overtaken you. No [illegible] ... can enter his house and steal goods for [illegible] ... unless he first ties him up. Then he can plunder [illegible] ...

"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

Commentary:

Jesus does not [illegible] ... He is not with us [illegible] ... He who does not gather with us scatters. While it is true that some people are for the time being more robust in their conviction and discipline and we can [illegible] ...

Corrections

IN THE MARCH 14 2007E, a story on Page A27 of the Metro section—"Property dispute might eyed in killing of peasant rights leader"—misspelled the name of the businessman who was murdered recently in Malate. The victim was Federico Claridad...not Clavidan...Delgado.

The same article erroneously described the victim's father, Francisco Delgado, as a former ambassador to the Holy See. It was Amnesty—not Francisco—Delgado who had served as ambassador to the Vatican.

Julieta T. Valbuena; 89

JULIETA TABUTOL Valbuena, widow of the late Miguel Valbuena, of Quezon City and New York City, died on March 11 at the Flushing Hospital in New York of cardiac arrest. She was 89.

She is survived by children Myrna Lizarraga, Miguel, Marilyn Chavez, Manuel and Michael, brothers and sisters Wednesday, March 14 at the St. Sebastian Church in Quezon, New York City. Cremation is set for March 15.

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TALE OF 2 HOSTAGES

FREEING PINAY IS NOT. Business executive Jennifer Fernandez, who had been reported kidnapped in Nigeria by her former husband Norman Jester (right) shows up at the office of MBI Director Nestor Mantaring on Wednesday. She brought news as why she dropped out of sight for more than a month.

BIOTECH STORY, A15

LAST HOSTAGE HOME. Foreign Undersecretary Jan Piguing Workers Affairs Secretary B. Ermita (r) welcome a Filipino engineer Winston Fredericks upon arrival at the Manila on Tuesday night. AP, NOEL CELIS

RP activists testify for US Congress rights hearings

By Inquirer staff

Left-leaning activists testified before the US Congress on Wednesday to accuse the Philippine government of human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings.

Among those who testified were Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza, Karapatan spokesperson Marie Hilao-Enriquez and Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr.

Ocampo said the Philippines was the most dangerous country for activists, with 800 killed since 2001.

Maza said the killings were "systematic and widespread" and that the Philippines was "the second worst country in the world for trade unionists."

Hilao-Enriquez said the killings were "not random acts of violence" but "deliberate and calculated acts of state agents."

Reyes said the killings were "not isolated incidents" but "part of a pattern of state-sponsored violence."

The activists urged the US Congress to withhold military aid to the Philippines until the human rights situation improves.

The hearings were held by the House Committee on International Relations' subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment.

Rep. Eni Faleomavaega (D-American Samoa), chairman of the subcommittee, said the hearings were prompted by "disturbing reports of extrajudicial killings, disappearances and torture of activists, journalists and religious workers in the Philippines."

Rep. Donald Manzullo (R-Illinois), ranking minority member of the subcommittee, said the hearings were "not intended to be anti-Philippines."

Rep. Tom Lantos (D-California), chairman of the House committee on international relations, said the hearings were "not intended to be anti-Philippines."

Rep. Lantos said the hearings were "not intended to be anti-Philippines."

Rep. Lantos said the hearings were "not intended to be anti-Philippines."

Rep. Lantos

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Woman No. 1 mistah of PMA …

From page A1

Cruz of Class 1999 and Tara Velasco of Class 2003.

The achievement is seen as a fitting tribute to the 100-year-old PMA, the first military academy in Asia, which started accepting women in 1993 through Republic Act No. 7192 (or the Women's Development and Nation-Building Act).

Two other women are among the top 20 of Mangayan Class—Cadets First Class Geraldine Mendoza, 23, of Pangasinan, who placed 18th, and Judyline Canonoy, 26, of Cebu, 19th.

Mojica will receive the Presidential Saber and the PMA Achievement Award for Excellence from President Macapagal-Arroyo. (In commencement speeches

She will receive as well the Philippine Navy Sword and the Zamora Award.

A total of 168 female cadets, including 23 members of Mangayan Class, have graduated from the PMA.

'Tawtauck'

Mojica, the youngest of seven children, said she did not expect to be the class valedictorian.

"I never aspired to be No. 1. My goal was to have a college education," she said.

Both Mojica and Canonoy are "tawtauck," a PMA term for cadets who had overgone a year or was because of academic and other reasons. They originally belonged to Class 2006.

"After that [time from school], I told myself it would be the last," said Mojica, who is also a champion swimmer and a taekwondo ita.

Mojica was a business administration sophomore at the Cavite State University when she and her brother were told by their parents that they had to stop their studies.

The family needed the money for the medication of their father, a security guard, who had diabetes.

"After that, and so if on on," Mojica saw an television ite-dare PMA superintendent, Gen. Rodolfo Tena, calling for applicants to the academy.

"I did not intend to take the exam but I had no other choice," she said.

'One of the best'

Mendoza said a cousin, a colonel, had inspired her to pursue a military career.

"I thought I would be better here [at the PMA]. But it turned out it became one of the best," she said.

Canonoy said that her mother had single-handedly raised her and her siblings, and that she had vowed since she was in first grade to enter the military to help her.

"I forgot about my vow; but when I was studying to be a teacher at the Cebu Normal University, all my classmates applied to take the PMA exam. I was only a walk-in applicant, but I was the only one among the 12 of us to be furloughed (going) to make it," Canonoy said.

She said she would marry her boyfriend after graduation next month.

Cadet First Class Arnelle Beltran of Zamboanga City, the class salutatorian, is one of the PMA's 22 cum laude graduates this year.

He will receive the Vice Presidential Saber, Philippine Air Force Sabre, Sandiganbayan Award, Management Award and Journey Award.

The others in the top 10 are Cadets First Class Arnold Enriquez of Zamboanga City (third), Emil Leyba of Tablay, Benguet, fourth; Cyrus Angelo Castillo, cum laude, of Mountain City, seventh; James Lowell Sarmiento, magna cum laude, of Bonuguete City, eighth; Reuben Sanchez Zate, cum laude, of Camarines Sur, ninth; and Lemuel Bas Antinio II, cum laude, of Quezon City, tenth.

Cadet First Class Andrew Regel Cabanatan, the class baron, will receive the PCSS Award for Leadership. He will also graduate cum laude.

1st in recent history

Maj. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig said the graduation ceremony would be held on a Monday—the first time in recent history—because that was the only time the President would be available.

According to Maligalig, the Mangayan Class is the first batch to graduate fully from the PMA Roadmap Plan, which was implemented in 2003 to combat what he called the "three evils of the PMA"—dilletism, academic inefficiency and bullying or hazing.

Of the 282 members of Mangayan Class, 191 will join the Army; 72, the Navy; and 59, the Air Force.

THE TOP 10 of the 282 graduating cadets of the Maringalog Mangayan Class pose for a souvenir shot with PMA Superintendent Maj. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig (center). The top achievers are from left, Lemuel Bas Antinio (10), Emil Gaspar Leyba (9), Jamille Diego Beltran (2), Judyline Canonoy (6), Andrew Mojica (1), Carolyn Mendoza (5), James Lowell Aquino (8), Cyrus Angelo Castillo (7), Arnold Enriquez (3) and Reuben Sancho Zate (9).

PMA cadets …

From page A1

the class.

Last year, the Philippine Military Academy conducted its yearly nationwide recruitment and examinations for applicants who will become members of Class 2008.

Of the 5,009 examinees, only 772 (or about 15.42 percent) passed, and only 267 were admitted as cadets.

Like others before them, they will receive free education.

Why is it that despite being criticized as a flawed institution, the PMA continues to draw young men and women, mainly from poor families, lure to bid?

The answer is simple: With the present economic conditions, sending children to private or public schools has become a problem for many parents. And free education is too tempting to pass up.

PMA cadets each receive a monthly stipend of about P5,000.

P514-M annual budget

The PMA receives a total of P514 million a year from the national government and spends P2 million to train each cadet during the four-year program.

Unlike other scholars, who are only given allowances, PMA cadets are considered employed. They get basic pay, hazard pay, clothing allowance, subsistence allowance, personal leave and cash gift.

In a study conducted by this reporter in 2005, many cadets said they joined the PMA because of the promise of deliverance from poverty through free college education, a monthly stipend that they could send to their families to help send their siblings to school, and a stable job after graduation.

Immediately after graduation, they are commissioned as regular officers with the rank of second lieutenant and assign in the Armed Forces.

Their officers receive a monthly salary and other benefits in the performance of their duties, whether they are in the Air Force, Army or Navy.

Is it any wonder that many cadets described their entry into the PMA as "a saving grace"?

Low family income

At least a fourth of the respondents said their parents earned between P5,000 and P10,000 a month.

The annual per capita poverty threshold was estimated at P11,906 in 2002—a 2.5-percent increase over the 2000 threshold of P11,620.

Thus, according to the National Statistical Coordination Board, a family of six should have a monthly income of P4,961 to meet its basic needs.

Of the total number of cadets interviewed for the study, 61.3 percent said they decided to join the PMA to get good and free education. Only 11.2 percent said they wanted to be of service to the country.

At least 20 percent of the respondents said their fathers were farmers, fishermen, laborers, clerks, traders, overseas Filipino workers and plant and machine operators; and 18 percent, retired soldiers or enlisted men.

Most of the respondents learned about the PMA through their parents or relatives, some of whom are graduates or retired officers and enlisted personnel.

The second main source of information was the mass media.

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Up to 20 Magdalo officers to plead guilty for less time

By Christine Avendaño

SOME MILITARY OFFICERS WILL PLEAD guilty soon (the July 2003 failed coup), also known as the Oakwood mutiny, in exchange for lenient punishment or less jail time.

The officers are among the 19 facing a general court martial for the failed coup, during which some 300 soldiers briefly occupied the Oakwood Premier Hotel and a section of the Ayala commercial center in Makati's financial district, demanding the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Icagara, presider of the general court martial, adjourned the hearing yesterday after defense lawyers made known that 15 or 20 officers wanted to reverse their earlier not-guilty pleas and plead guilty to a lesser offense.

Lead prosecutor Col. Orlando Ocella said that 40 other officers were considering the same option "but have not made up their minds yet."

Ocella told the court that he had informed "higher authorities" about the plea bargain that defense lawyers presented to prosecutors a month ago and was waiting for final approval.

All 19 are accused in the case of the Scout of the Philippines vs. Gen. Roberto Rivera, one of two cases being jointly tried by the general court martial in connection with the 2003 failed coup.

In the Rivera case, the officers are charged with violating five provisions of the Articles of War, which are ensuring mutiny, embezzling an officer and a gentleman, conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline, disrespect to the President, and disrespect to superior officers.

The second case, People of the Philippines vs. Capt. Milo Maestrecampo, involves the core group of the Magdalo junior officers numbering 20. They are charged with conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

The group includes the group's leaders Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, who is now running for the Senate, and Army Capt. Gerardo Gambala.

Davila disclosed to say what concessions were being sought by the 20 military officers in exchange for their guilty pleas.

"Some of the conditions that they mentioned seem to be reasonable. Some are not reasonable," he said.

Lawyer Trixie Angeles, who represents Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, said the defense was preparing to consolidate the charges against their clients and reduce them to a "single charge and single penalty."

Angeles said her guess was that the lawyers were aiming to enter a guilty plea on the lesser charge of conduct unbecoming.

"The penalty will be whatever the time has been served plus a minimum of 10 months, maximum per until finality of judgment and, discharge [from the service]," Angeles said in response.

Another defense lawyer Edgardo Abaya said his clients were exercising "individual decisions."

"It's your right as an accused individual to change your plea," Abaya said.

Abaya said the soldiers, who have been detained for almost four years, faced a long court process and "may have been doing a lot of thinking.

"It's possible they are growing impatient since they also have families," he said.

2 airport cops sacked

By Tarra Quismundo

THREE POLICEMEN HAVE BEEN removed from airport duty after allegedly extorting cash from a Japanese passenger during a routine security check at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 2.

SPO2 Jesy Calalo, PO2 Orlando Tabingo and SPO1 Danilo Pangilinan were relieved from security detail at the Nike Centennial Terminal on Tuesday after Japanese Ogata Kazuo told airport police that officers demanded money from him before his Fukuoka-bound flight on March 6.

Yonso returned to the Philippines on March 11 to lodge a complaint against the two policemen.

Yonso told investigators that the police officers, assigned at the security checkpoints at Naia Terminal 2's International departure area, at first demanded 5,000 pesos upon initial screening.

The passenger ignored them but, he alleged, one female police officer and two policemen inspected his bag and told him that the cash they found inside was confiscated from being carried out of the country. He said the two officers took him aside and demanded P35,000 from him.

Victorino: 70

BILIBINA VICTORINO, widow of the late Herminio "Nic" Victorino of the Rotary Club of Manila and UST Philex dies 9:55 a.m. (Rotary Meeting, March 11).

Her remains lie in the family residence at 5366 Aluvijo St., Barangay Olympia, Makati City.

Interment will be on March 18 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

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May bago sa 'min bayan

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Vol. 23 No. 89
OPINION

Limits of the pulpit

EDITORIAL

THE CURIOUS THING IS THAT MARIANO VELARDE, more famously known as Brother Mike, wants to castle Abraham of the Bible and Diogenes of Ancient Greece. A few days ago, Velarde asked the Catholic bishops of the Philippines to proclaim 18 good men and women worthy of Catholic votes. It may be recalled that Abraham couldn't find 10 in Sodom and Gomorrah; and, as legend has it, Diogenes couldn't find even one honest man in Athens.

At first, Abraham asked God to spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (whose reputation he was unsure of) if he found 50 righteous people there. Balking so, he asked God to lower the limit, step by step—to 45, then to 40, 30 and 20. In each instance, he failed in his search, until he successfully negotiated to bring the limit down to 10. Counting Lot (his nephew), his wife, at least two married daughters, at least two sons and two unmarried daughters, Abraham could present only eight righteous people. And so God went on to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.

Diogenes the cynic is said to have regularly gone around the marketplace in Athens with a torch (or a lamp) in broad daylight, looking for an honest man—he never found one.

And now Velarde wants to outdo both.

Since 1986, when he decided to support the vice presidential candidacy of Arturo Tolentino, Velarde has been a player—and an increasingly important one—in the political scene. The membership of his Catholic charismatic group, El Shaddai, is roasted variously at three to seven millions; and not being a cleric, Velarde has often openly endorsed national candidates. It is over the question of who his group should endorse that Velarde's appeal to the bishops is based.

The Catholic bishops are correct in resisting Velarde's appeal, which will certainly draw them into the endorsement game. It is true that—objectively speaking, that is, in a purely political sense—it always difficult, particularly for politically unsophisticated prelates, to play. Even the late Jaime Cardinal Sin came to realize he did not possess a unanimal vote; what more a disunited (and cynical to the point of pariahyin) group of bishops, such as the Philippine Catholic Church has today.

In contrast, the crucial period of our national formation from 1898 to 1946—when our national leadership was frankly mulatto, even hentic, in the Catholic Church—increasingly saw Catholicism carve out a place for itself in the political life of the nation.

But there were limits. As our political system degenerated, and the moral authority of elected leaders sharply declined, the Catholic and other churches came to play an important, at times prophetic, role in identifying when political life needed to be informed by guidelines governing faith and morals as applied to governance. The broader these guidelines were, the more acceptable, even crucial, they became.

The disgraceful 1949 elections led to the hierarchy's support for clean elections in 1953, including support for Magsaysay, which was revived in the 1980s, which was marked by a collapsing economy and a political system so disreputable as it had once been in 1949. The Church played a role in proclaiming the governments of Marcos and Estrada as devoid of "the mandate of Heaven," indisputably so in 1986 and less successfully so in 2001 and since. Cardinal Sin himself, in the wake of the May 2001 revolt, began the process of reorienting from active intervention in politics and a return to a (passive) attitude toward faith and morals—and tried to define how these should interplay with partisan politics.

Therefore, it is perhaps heuristics for the nation that bishops focus on the broad policies along which they have a right to guide their flock, and that they resist the temptation to involve constituents, a partisan activity that can only diminish their moral authority. Espousing a Catholic-oriented approach to political participation is properly the role of political parties such as Ang Kapatiran. It is one that Mike Velarde can, and has, played—but so his own responsibility. It isn't a moral obligation, in a sense, that he can, or should, point out to the bishops. If it does seem to all things has become a global Catholic advocacy, then it begins at home, with the distinctions that bishops may have ignored in the past, but are adhering to today: to teach, but not command, when it comes to faith and politics.

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Mixed bag

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

LONGER THAN ANYBODY IN EAST ASIA,' Filipinos have used uncoated dessert tablespoons (measuring 15 milliliters) to measure medicine, teaspoons, notes a new Asian Development Bank (ADB) economic study. The result: are a mixed bag.

"A decade and a half on, almost tabula rasa in the Philippines has another heavy a sensible economy or a disappointed failure," notes Dr. Solita Monsod, University of the Philippines, Hall Fill (Australian National University) and Shaun de Silva Pan (Asia Pacific Policy Center).

In their summary of "The Dynamics of Regional Development," the three academics argue: "Reforms [in broadly market] ... foster administrative and political authority has been transferred to regions and some ... retains high-quality local governments like Quezon City) it make a difference."

But it "has not delivered a decisive shift of power and resources out of the center," they add. Neither has it resulted in "efficient, efficient and responsive local government" nor improved shoddy governance.

Overwhelming benefits of "decentralization" failed to halt three regions. "The two Manila spillover of northern and central Luzon and the Cebu-centered Visayas." Nor one region in the Philippines can be singled out as the most globally connected, although "socchannel" and Metro Manila and Cebu—are well-wired internationally.

The policymakers explore strategies that hastened these sustained Regions well-wired in to the global economy gone faster. China's coastal Fujaita, Mexico's border with the United States, and Malaysia's Penang-Johor-Singapore triangle. Here, the need is still to be clear, predictable and stable regulatory environment.

Limited government worldwhere are under pressure to loosen their leash on cash and clout. In China, Russia and Vietnam, the effort unleashed up to established economic economies controlled and free markets opened. Similar shifts followed the overthrow of colonial and authoritarian systems," as in Subarto's Indonesia. India and Malaysia have well-honed, system-regime structures.

Philippine home for local theorists education were meticulous. The push blinding taxation arises, one provision in Sen. Emmanuel Pelaez's "Basic Charter" of the 1950s had, by 1980, evolved into a full draft that ran. Aquilino Pimentel shepherded through Congress into the Local Government Code. "Every implementation has been raised." The transfer of 70,000 personnel, from central government to the regions, has not been completed.

The political economy of regions reflects national patterns: (1) crowding dozens of the inn and the control of governments; (2) weak political institutionalization or bureaucracies; (3) dynastic control by major families.

Despite their enhanced powers, LGUs remain malgre to development. "Their expenditure amounts to just 2.3 percent of the GDP of net decentralization"—puny by other developed Asian regions.

"They've been unwilling to raise their own revenue, particularly through potentially rich sources such as property tax. The widespread perception is that LGUs are essentially controlled by local elites, unwilling to tax themselves."

Instead, LGUs prefer to panhandle for their internal revenue allotments from Malacañang. "Shell cities," unable to raise their income, saw their allotments branch-line 1991 to 129, just to cash in on IRAs.

One reason is the lag of regional development, the study says, is that "local government elections have generally not been effective in enacting accountability. Much political success in the weakly governed units yields development achievements." Read: Do nothing results get re-elected.

"In the extreme, citizens perceive more clearly the sources of poor decision-making in politics across delivery, and local level accountability is potentially on the rise," the study adds. But "weak-running institutions, uneven services, process and (especially) mindsets is a slow, long-term process."

* * *

E-mail: jmercado@gmail.com

State of the 'neysion'

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IT'S A HOME, CAMBLE OR JUS CREMANTS past. Just when movies have become a business in Philippine history—are used to produce more than 30 per cent, and you're down to a handful—but not dared come out with one at its small-town to himself and friends. Indeed, he hasn't come out with a romance, a sex farce, or a horror comedy-musical bodyspeaks, the personality done united way to increase per person-making income. He has almost some out with a thought provoking satire.

I sincerely mean it dearly—with his garnish pays off, if only to prove to local movie producers there's still a market out there, albeit one that demands more and more creative stuff. There always is the possibility that he's just trying to be daring in as the Oscars, or indeed when I see giant strides being made by Chito Lucd Tarantel, Ben Feliciano movies (prove you don't need huge stars and a huge budget to make movies, you just need a huge idea), Jeffrey Jeturian (for transparency) and even Thailand (for sure-entry that used to need students to the Philippines to learn as much as they could from it), Twinyo for Philippine movies. Not too long ago, we were poised to conquer the world in their respects. Which is the sort of cheap Urbano's movie itself sings, even as it manipulates as comedy.

That movie is "Ang M.O.N.A.L.I.S.A. ni Mr. Hindi (Hindyan Ojeda Yuson)," which I would like to frame as the unbelievable character Urbano popularized on local TV many years ago with "Mongolian Barbecue." Its premise is clever. Mr. Hindi, who is now living a manic, if unconscious backward, life in Mongolia, gets a letter from the Philippines saying Professor Leonardo da Vinci—and the brilliant painting he mind. Should accept the audience—now the kind-hearted soul who raised him in the Philippines after his parents died in an accident while they were in Mongolia to see Cupid—of the prospect of coming back to the Philippines of to a long time-filling him with cruel pleasure. He recalls—hopefully that the Philippines of was a veritable pearl of the orient, rich, lush, full of grand vistas and an even grander people. It correctly that, when he left it, wise, well, poised to conquer the world. Now rarely used, are it must be by now, he imagines.

He finds the new place bizarre, and gets a manic awakening. The gap between expectations and reality proves as wide as the distance between the Philippines and Mongolia itself. Hindi gets over all sorts of setbacks, refusing all his resolutions almost a beautiful land and a beautiful people. In the end, he gets to be reborn as a tot-sized and an NPA rebel combined. He is presented to the media by the architect in his face much the worse for wear and beating, and there he delivers a speech—basics the title of the movie. Whatever happened to the Philippines? How could a people so rich in culture and generosity have become so full of selfishness and ill-will?

Nothing like the point of view of a Swan like "outsider" to let us know the point about our national tragedy. Or to look outlt, now even at our national foibles, which have caused it. The hit me: ranges from tugged to grand, from tremendous to inspired, from paralytic to sublime. The movie refuses to put out a segue, but the whole isn't just one series of verbal and visual gags strung together on the equivalent of a clothesline store just do so. Dire or take a wayward turn that Urbano couldn't resist, the movie comes off as one cohesive piece of work, at least in a comedic sort (it loses as we've seen since the days of "Sir O'Clock Times." A sampling of the weakest that transpires there:

Rebel, Hindi's assistant, comes to arms when a cop approaches them. The cop says angrily "I'm a cop, not a hold-upper." Rebel asks, "There's a difference?" When Hindi and Rebel drop by City Hall, a woman is napping on her desk. When they wake her up, she gets angry. But it's office hours, Hindi protests. Presently, the woman snaps back, it's the official time for napping. Later, they encounter zombies along the corridor. Those are the 15.36 employees, explains an official. Hindi asks Congressman Hindi Kabayan (Joey Marquez) how he talks. Well, they once had a basketball team composed of Juan Pusoan, Juan Mahirap, himself et al. "Who was your name?" Hindi Manong replies, "Yung subaybay dun, 'yung na nasa" (the one who bites him). "Do you mind if we record the boss?" Hindi asks. Of course, readers are billions. He saw a couple of boys brandishing and he breaks them up. "Why are you fighting?" he asks. And addressing, "You're just like politicians."

Urbano gets no small help from a whole slew of veteran actors who have lent their abundant talents to the movie. Ronaldo Valdez is the consummate one of deer goodwill. You'll find the list in the ads. They are uniformly hilarious, but Mortimer stands out in the role of the character to recapitulate not on TV many years ago. With direction done the comes, his characters will remind you of Urbano's. They are not otherwise. Thus all the adjusted for one pot together.

Above all, M.O.N.A.L.I. delights while leaving its audience with much to think about. It never forgets it is a movie, and a comedy at that; not of a political tract or a polemic in pamphlet form or that. It's just what the doctor ordered for the special patient called Just-do In Time, a sugar-coated pill for someone who doesn't even know he is sick and dying. In its own wacky way, it partakes liberally of the best of the Filipino comedic traditions, the kind one can find in world fair.

Like the best of satire, M.O.N.A.L.I. is funny. M.O.N.A.L.I. is serious. M.O.N.A.L.I. is cutting. M.O.N.A.L.I. is tragic. M.O.N.A.L.I. is comic. M.O.N.A.L.I. is grotesque.

Above all, it. Between paying for your ticket and paying your taxes, save in one where your money is better spent.

Battling corruption

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Avelinda Alfaro-Cassanova

Corruption keeps most governments, in many months international rankings for China, Japan and Korea, in fact, a media report noted this week Manila President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo recommended more than the creation of a task force to be headed by the presidential assistant that had allowed him to keep corruption investigations at bay. It seems that China's group has been implicated in party financing and other corruption scandals, leading high-level officials in their quest to survive.

There is suspicion that the key actors in administrations have to do more politicked with against corruption in Asian countries. Many of the problems identified in this socio-political malaise in economic development capabilities. And I think, who and to place it might be only limited success.

At first has obviously lost so much face over the past several years that he has been Nato's greatest strategist. But reason is that every re-offense he has blamed Clinton has to announce the postponement of Nato. The problem is not Nato's internal tactical defects. It should be pointed out, however, that a lot of those defects appear to be those directly linked to the corruption that already has been mentioned. Nato's failure to act in the Balkans is a direct result of the corruption that existed in the Balkans.

The Philippines has established in succession in the Asian Development Bank's Corruption Index not. Approval from the World Bank Association (WBA) shows the 10 that Spain is responsible 2000.

MDGs, FTAs

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Cristina P. Duran

ALPHABET SOUP AFFAIRS! THE LETTERS MG continuing to run head this letters in front of a plethora soup bowl top with dollops of papaya. One moment I know when a bunch of letters means, the next moment I know what's talking when FIA is, but I'm not sure what MG stands for. Is "sustainable impact assessment." Do FTA and FDI mean the same? Are we even in EPA? What happened to the WTO?

and then there are the Millennium goals. Trade liberalization, development, micro-finance, and, shhhh, bilateral development, etc. Australia has long words. We say her forgiven when it is simply mean the poor? But I will say that I am not sure what the poor mean by "get" though I am only poorer a time, are the fate of development, hunger or poverty.

These thoughts were swirling in my head while attending two serious seminars meant to help me understand what is going on in this world, this country especially.

The first one was on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) seminar, which was cutely titled "Bridging the Gap between the MDGs and the Social Science Development Projects (UNDP). For this one, the only way to get translation to stay put was to sit down in some shock. And so we were happily showered in the hands of Stephen de Bruyn, Executive Director of the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) and Social Watch (an acronym WDS), to help with the A to Z of the MDGs. Did you know that the MDGs are the world's response to the UN's Millennium Declaration of September 2000?

The second morning session of civil society organizations (CSOs) and academics who have been involved in monitoring, tracking and reporting to the proposed free trade agreements between the Philippines United and the formation of Southeast Asian Nations (ELA) nations PTAs. I had been with them at the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF) in Bilbao, Spain, in October's final. AEPF is held for the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process. Its participants all are opposed to all or almost all of it.

A little picture here. The 2015 MDGs have been around since the 1980s and even teenagers express

should know them by heart. Well, 2015 is ten years away, and by then MDGs would have been met, as: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; (8) develop a global partnership for development.

Goals 1 to 7 are most valid, some poor nations just must be dealt with on the ground. Goal 8 is kicked the most difficult to track and quantify, something that addressed by countries of developed nations. But no wonder Goal 8 could live alone as each Goals 1 to 7. In our poorer MDG nations, it is a luxury that we realize longed explanation.

Part of it says, "Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory ... address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff and quota-free access for their exports, enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries, cancellation of official bilateral debt ... provide access to affordable essential drugs ... [and] work with the benefits of new technologies ..."

But is the EU from PTA would be yes to some? The aim is to strengthen the trade and investment. The goals of our and the country of the other more new concepts. CSOs from Asian and Europe are concerned about the proposed EU-Asean FTA, that would be the latest bullet volley of the free trade. The CSOs are demanding an SIA (sustainability) before negotiations.

They cite the EU-Mexico agreement that resulted in Mexican doubling trade deficit, not contrary to the predicted benefits to labor, the agreement resulted in rising unemployment, temporary employment creation, low-to-medium wages and absence of social security. While the Philippines and Mexico are different, they are substantially in foreign takeovers of domestic industries, without generating additional employment or increased wages.

The EU-Asia approach is also pushing closed such service FTAs in other regions regardless of the consequences, the USDA trade. The EU, they add, seeks to do promoting any development projects with its push in its interests to the countries of a more productive people's power base is already reducing access to affordable medicines and education in developing countries.

Here the objectives come with dollops of papaya. I need to go to our shoes and find grow the names a human face.

(send feedback to avm@philstar.net.ph

Price of freedom

YOUNG BLOOD

Alyssa Ayuste

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from students commenting and below ... Ed.

Hours had the girl contacted to keep me from falling to can I drop pencilled. How is to do control upon unskill some of his friends, from until stuffed was to hide clap about the future I hope after seeing all those of music cookies.

Little don't understand what like to mean them, and it's up to now that I realize that procedure is sometimes optimistic with superhuman. Home can be very comfortable. She can't trust me to go out into the so-called big bad world where nothing is cold and matters.

When I was in Grade 1, everyone else went on a camping trip except me. Mom told me it was OK and that I wouldn't miss anything. My room on a map not small town in Laguna instead, and she assured me I could go with my classmates when I was a little older. Being the youngest in the class (literally didn't help). So when everyone went back to class and talked about the huge big that crept into their tent in this thing that they did, I would just smile, keep silent and pretend I saw that bug to bad, but with them, too. But then I came home to tell me my mother and I did while they were on that camping trip.

After missing all the camping trip during my elementary school years, I guess I got used to it. Thank heavens, I got to go on the field trip conditions so I would have no hard time to recover. Illness all of my experience with my friends and others, I don't.

In high school, I got to hang out with friends in the mall and wherever, but working library permission entailed such a long process, starting with questions about who would be in my house and who would fetch me, that it wasn't for me very. Mom only allowed me to go by myself if she could fetch me to 9 p.m.

Sleepovers I was allowed to go only once, and it took two weeks of pleading before she let me. Compare that to my friends mates who could bunk in at their friends' houses at short notice.

During my last year in high school, I was invited to join a very dear junior dance troupe, and I was ecstatic to be selected. It was during the first PTA meeting of the session when my advisor told Mom about the invitation, and she couldn't say no. But as we went leaving after the meeting, she was mumbling about how hard it would be to manage the trip.

I went, and came back, and my partner mom and returned. But I was back in my prison. I was not allowed to attend our annual dinner dance. I was one of only four students in our whole batch who didn't go, but while she told us tried hours and told religious sessions, mine was simply that how dangerous could a trip to Tagaytay be? Most annual monetary reasons, but everyone knows that was not the case.

During my first semester in college, I applied for membership in an organization. I had to drop out soon after because all the meetings were held late at night. One time I took a jeepney on my way home and we got held up. But when I advised home in midnight, instead of second-hand cigarette smoke, I was told to stay at home. Although a few members of the org were really great people, I felt that I didn't fit in. Besides I had had enough of the strictness about those late nights, too.

There then when I have to go here or there, I need to prove my reasons for such a long time there to because such a further and I usually give up the whole idea. Here keeps giving up, and I am now known for doing so.

In what if I'm just 10? I can't see how a simple trip to or on would be so complicated and dangerous.

But that is where I have always been. Behind a grid, just looking down. I now understand why I loved watching. Because I would never take part in but learning to break the grid that held me back. I'm not sure that grid will ever fully fall off me. I mean that who doesn't dare to break one at my self.

My only window to the world is the LCD screen, and computer. More exceptions that I am in front of my PC the whole day. But the distance I go in Here I am here to go where I want to go, and I can do what I want to do. I can be myself and not always try and see me that is governed by her or society. And the worst thing that could happen is that our Internet fail, would skyrocket or a really bad virus disguised as a game would infect my computer.

A few steps more from the grid to a window which opens to the world. But what I have learned is that I have only options left for me would be to jump down to the pavement or go on to our neighbor's roof. Either way, there's a risk of getting injured. If I jump, I'll surely break a foot. If I move to my neighbor's I may trod, a couple shudder may dart. But, thinking about it, I may be fear of my mother when I do go through. I realize that the risk of getting injured is the price of freedom.

When I decide to leave, either by breaking the grid and crippling down or going through the windows, I will let you know somehow.

Alyssa Ayuste, 18, is a 3rd European Languages freshman at UP Diliman.

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Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph or hand-write it and mail it to the Features desk, 4th floor, Inquirer Building, 40 Locsin St., Makati City. Please include your complete address, e-mail address and contact number. Articles should not have been previously published.

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Caught in the middle

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

On JULY 7, 2001, I WROTE IN THIS SPACE T&O "The Centre must hold." At a time when the Presidency seems very unsteady, I repeat that post from the Roosevelt "winning winning" speech re-sent the presidency of Franklin. And yet I post could I say more, in the time, was to say on the possibility that the incumbent could end up with the middle finding (and spending new) vocabulary and the ultimate goal of the incumbent is the operation of the President's legitimate. Those vocabulary were the Left and the Pseudo-Nationalists.

In the time I left, and pollsters, there was one of those, make-or-break, momentary, either / or/ and/ or/ or/ or

Rampant violation of election law

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9006 (THE Electoral Reforms Law of 1987) introduces additional reforms into our electoral system.

Let me cite pertinent provisions of this law that have been flagrantly violated during elections, even as the campaign period for the May 2007 elections encroaching:

"Sec. 10. Common Poster Areas. The commission shall designate common poster areas in strategic public places such as markets, barangay centers and the like wherein candidates can post, display, or exhibit election propaganda in accordance with further rules and regulations.

"Sec. 11. Prohibited Forms of Election Propaganda. In addition to the forms of election propaganda prohibited under Section 85 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 881, as amended, it shall be unlawful:

(a) to draw, paint, inscribe, write, post, display or publish any election propaganda in any place, whether private or public, except in common poster areas and in billboards provided in the immediately preceding section, at the candidate's own residence, or at the campaign headquarters of the candidate or political party: Provided that such posters or election propaganda shall in no case exceed two (2) feet by three (3) feet in area: Provided further, that in the case of and on the occasion of a public meeting or rally, it may not be more than two (2) and not exceeding three (3) feet by eight (8) feet each that may be displayed five (5) days before the date of the meeting or rally and shall be removed within twenty-four (24) hours after said meeting or rally;"

The MMDA has made some efforts to remove propaganda materials posted in violation of the law, but it is decidedly one with the frequency and number of violations. And there seemed for the violators, when questioned on video by the MMDA personnel, to give them the instructions to poster-like persons, refused to name names. The Comelec and the MMDA therefore should hold the candidates whose names appear in the propaganda materials liable for violation of the election law. This is the only way the law can be upheld.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said that the penalty could be the disqualification of the guilty candidate. The Chair should make true his words to the public and the candidates will have reason to believe him.

—JOSE HOILO G. RAMOS,
12 Mindanao St.,
Filipinas Village, Marikina City

LETTERS

Expensive Pichay

SENATORIAL ASPIRANT PROspero Pichay, who has been a congressman for three terms, should have mastered a bill in Congress to strengthen our agriculture sector and promote regression his name with valuable learned, he lays videos, at the least, about the importance of vegetables from Davao.

Nowadays, pichay and other vegetables are expensive and hardly affordable to the masses. A very small bundle of pichay here in Zamboanga City costs P5.

"Planting a Pichay in the Senate" will not alleviate poverty. Its eye-spending P10 million per week for all sorts of campaign tricks. Pichay will be more expensive after the elections ... if he wins.

—JOSE ESPINOSA JR.,
z_jrespinosa@yahoo.com

Meralco not charging meter deposit

THE SOON REPLY TO THE LETTER sent by Teodoro Miguel Jr. titled "ERC enforcing unlawful deposit to consumers?" (Inquirer, 3/12/07).

We would like to clarify that the Distribution Services and Open Access Rules (DSOAR) has not repealed the Magna Carta for Residential Customers, which was promulgated by the Energy Regulatory Commission on June 9, 2004.

As stated in Article III, Sec. 3.1.1 of the DSOAR, "The consumer who is subject to disconnection and who requests termination of service shall be required to first pay any unpaid billed amounts. The customer's bill deposit shall be refunded to the customer in accordance with his average monthly bill for the preceding year."

Miguel's power was disconnected on March 27, 2006 and was subsequently reconnected on April 6, 2006. He requested on April 6, 2006. He requested (promptly reconnected upon re-demand of his unpaid bill) on the understanding that he would no

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To feast on others' misfortunes

MEHOR TORRE, AN A COLUMnist, writes as a good guide to making Pinoy pay stylists. I commend his recent article, "Peace if we have to" and agree with him that "Genuine unity starts to be fun, superficial and collaborative differences, but to resolve, also be a crime, because our legal system currently believes that each of our basic rights is our right to grieve." (Inquirer, 3/10/07)

May I thank him for reminding us that most public figures have the basic human right to privacy. "The only thing ones own their public is their best performance.

PCSO relying on slow computers?

THIS IS IN REPLY TO MANUEL Mendez's letter titled "Announcement of winners right after town draw is not doable." (Inquirer, 12/7/06).

Two things have to be considered. One, the communication delay from the PCSO terminals around the country to its central computer system. Two, the retrieval of the data from the computer's database.

The communication of data initiated via the basic values on-screen when, in front of the betting stops at 9 p.m., an hour before the 9 p.m. draw shown on TV. And as mentioned, many bets are placed days, even two weeks, before the actual draw. Moreover, the PCSO must have a sophisticated and expert bet checker.

The retrieval of data should be the tricky part but it really is not. I understand some 40 percent of the betting proceeds are plowed into the prizes. Since the average daily turnover in the sweepstakes pot is P8 million, it is reasonable to assume that some 12.8 million bets are placed for each sweepstakes draw. When the bets number in millions, over 20, a supercomputer—or with little less power—a few minutes to determine how many combinations have that number and what will be the winning three digit combination. Then, the PCSO computer can easily determine if there is a winner or winners.

Mendez claims that "the most is announced only in the presence of bets placed nationwide." Why is known's name should "due be done"? (Inquirer, 12/7/06).

He claims "It's not only the jackpot winner that the system withhold but all the thousands and thousands of winning combinations.

Right step but may just be cosmetic

THE RESIGNATION OF SS RTC [illegible] is an appreciable step in the right direction. However, unless the perpetrators are first identified and brought to the halls of justice, these special killings will have nobody to try.

The case of Samal Judge Silvestre Abito, Sarera of the province of Bataan is a classic example. Judge Abito was gunned down in the back on May 8, 2001, allegedly by Cpl. Alberto Rubio of the Philippine Army, whose unit was securing the visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo to Antipolo City during that time. The evidence against Cpl. Rubio [illegible] was an RPG, one to disrupt Abito was. But witnesses could be sure, unnamed and naming for a ride when he was killed.

The Office of the Ombudsman of Antipolo City, after the ambush's version of the incident and indicted Rubio for homicide. Rubio could no longer be found. The RTC Antipolo was

—ELPIDIO G. CUSI JR.,
vice president and Head,
Corporate Communications,
Meralco, Pasig City

—FELIX PEDRAZA GOPLEN,
#93 Rizal and Bela Rosa Sts.,
BF Executive Triangle,
Pantabangan

—RENATO B. AGUILAR JR.,
[illegible]

Across the NATION

PROTESTERS display placards during a picket at the gates of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City to protest the spate of killings of activists and activists in the country. (INQUIRER)

Member of Bayan Muna is murder victim No. 838

DAVAO CITY—A MASKED MAN fatally shot yet another leftist in Pigcawayan, North Cotabato, just a day after a Bayan Muna member was killed in Misamis Oriental.

The toll is now 838 murdered leftists, according to the human rights group Karapatan.

Bayan Muna Southern Mindanao reported on Wednesday that its member, Carlito Cerezo, 49, was outside his house in Purok Narra in Barangay Malapatan, Pigcawayan when he was shot in the head at around 8 p.m. on Tuesday.

The assailant, who wore long sleeves and a helmet, fled on a motorcycle.

Bayan Muna said that as early as March 6, villagers had noticed an unidentified motorcycle-riding man in the area.

Quoting one of its local volunteers, Bayan Muna said the unidentified man usually arrives in the afternoon.

Gate crasher

"On March 13, the victim, together with friends and relatives, were having a send-off gathering and reorientation at the back portion of the victim's house while enjoying cake (courtesy treat)," Bayan Muna said.

Cerezo excused himself by 6 p.m. to take dinner.

It was when the assailant, who witnesses said had been in the area since 7:30 p.m., arrived and shot Cerezo.

"The assailant wearing dark long sleeves and a helmet suddenly appeared and shot the victim in the head using a .45-cal. pistol with silencer. The victim died on the spot," Bayan Muna reported.

Karapatan in Southern Mindanao has condemned Cerezo's murder and blamed it on the government.

"We, the family and relatives believed that this execution is a result of a total crackdown launched by the Arroyo administration, through its iron hand, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and its agents-cum-Highlanders (lintern)," the group said.

Irritability

The group said the military could soon be blamed in a bone-crusher ball after United Nations Special Rapporteur Philip Alston blamed it for the killings.

"Pointing to the military as the perpetrators of the systematic political killings irritated them," it said.

He said that the military was doing its best "to save its dying credibility" by accusing communists for the murders.

"The Arroyo administration is greatly desperate to win by power sting to machinery to topple her critics. Karapatan believed that as long the Arroyo remains in power, the issues of political killings, forced disappearance and other human rights violations will never be resolved," Karapatan said.

Gabriela branded the Arroyo administration as "the most lustful of governments as it is the only government which can murder a reference to another member."

Gabriela cited the death of Siche Bustamante Casallano, who stood witness to the murder of her father-in-law during Alston's visit.

Bustamante-Casallano told Alston that military agents trailed her father-in-law, farmer-activist Dionisio Casallano Jeffrey Ryan, Aida Agad-o and Grace Alberto, Inquirer Mindanao

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Baguio breast cancer patients call for support group creation

BAGUIO CITY—Maria Victoria Bajarias, 48, a breast cancer survivor, hopes for the creation of a support group to help cancer survivors spread awareness on the disease.

"We have basic facts about cancer in Baguio. Little old people know that we smoked each other and that [cancer] can be treated. Cancer is not a death sentence," said Bajarias, Northern Luzon coordinator of International on Breast Cancer and Other Sections (Iconcerns), in a forum last week.

Bajarias, citing statistics from the Philippine Cancer Society, said the Philippines tops countries in Southeast Asia for the number of breast cancer cases. The PCS said cases were rising by an average of 3 percent annually.

It said breast cancer was the leading cause of death among Filipino women and the second most prevalent type of cancer in the country next only to cancer of the lungs.

Bajarias said every Filipina had a 1:9 percent risk of getting breast cancer. Some 6,500 breast cancer patients die each year while 25 percent of the women survivors succumb with the disease in 2005, she said.

Diet and lifestyle could be among the possible factors that involve cancer, she said.

"Filipinos love to eat too much, drink and smoke," she said.

Dr. Jocelyn Lyma, president of the Philippine Society of Medical Oncologists (PSMO), said an study has been conducted yet to explain the cause of breast cancer.

Lyma said cases could have cancer due to environment, exposure to radiation and genetics.

"While we do not have studies to prove the cause of breast cancer, it is more of a risk factor," she said.

Maria Theresa Bautista, president of the Mariano Club, a group of women professionals in Baguio helping cancer patients, said the statistics should be alarming enough to drive attention.

"Like HIV-AIDS, breast cancer should be given importance when it comes to education and information because it comes without you knowing it," Bautista said.

"The cure for breast cancer may not be discovered here and now and I don't may continue to one. But what can we do about breast cancer besides treating it and keeping people from getting it? Through concerted effort in spreading high impact information on campaign that focus on breast cancer education, prevention, early detection, screening and treatment," Bajarias said.

She said cancer was a very personal battle and although treatments and personal might exist, its impact to the life of every woman would be the same.

"The fear of wondering death or dying, the pain possibility of leaving loved ones behind, a false sense of losing ones femininity, the distress of where and how to source funds for treatments, the physical pain of the victim or onslaught of surgery, numerous chemotherapy cycles and radiation sessions, the loss of self and self esteem . . . I could go on and on and on," she said.

She said support groups for breast cancer patients had already been established in Cebu and Metro Manila. These groups, have their own battery because to accommodate patients in other provinces.

Bajarias said her group wanted to spread the word that cancer is a social issue. She lamented that cancer has always been marginalized in health programs on preventive measures. Dodyrey Cabotaje, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Social welfare execs keep off teenage rebel captured after clash

VIRAC, CATANDUANES—Provincial social welfare officials refused to take custody of a 17-year-old New People's Army rebel captured by a team of soldiers and policemen after an encounter on Monday.

Rina Illa Havas, provincial social welfare development officer, said her office would not take the teenager into custody because her office could not guarantee her security.

Insurgency, or rebellion, is not among the crimes cited in Republic Act No. 9344, which provides protection for children caught in conflict with the law, she said.

The identity of the suspected teenage rebel was withheld to protect her.

Session Capt. Teodoro Gasi, police provincial director, said the rebel was captured in an encounter in a forested barangay of San Andres town, about 20 kilometers from the capital town of Virac.

Gasi said his female rebel was captured after a clash with eight NPA rebels who had encamped in a mountainous area.

He said the military and police team was composed of members of the Alpha Company, 49th Infantry Battalion led by 2Lt. Vince Crespo, and the Provincial Police Mobile Group (PPMG) headed by Insp. Rogelio Pacheco.

Bharat said last year, a 16-year-old rebel was turned over to them by the Vigan police.

She said social workers tried to contact the boy's family in Camarines norte but could not locate them.

The boy has since been staying with the Vigan police for security reasons, she added. Roman Gonzales, Inquirer Southern Luminzon

TOP GRAINS
Corn is still the best, according to organizers of a corn festival in South Cotabato, a corn-producing province in Mindanao.

Mayor's claim cops used by pols baseless—PNP

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE chief Director General Oscar Calderon denied an allegation of Mayor Jesse Castillo, of Bocaue, Cruise, that the PNP was being used by a high ranking politician for partisan politics.

"The mayor's claim is purely speculative and baseless," Calderon said in a statement in response to full page ads placed by Castillo.

"The PNP is a professional organization and it is unfair for anyone to claim control of the PNP."

Calderon dared Castillo to name the politicians who were used by Cruise politicians for partisan politics and show proof of his allegations.

Chief Supt. Samuel Pacillan Jr., PNP spokesperson, added that Castillo's allegation that the PNP was involved in manipulating the results of the 2001 elections in favor of administration candidates was misleading.

"How can he make that claim when he won in Bocaue in 2001 against then administration bet Lani Mercado," he said. "I was Deputy provincial director of Cruise then and we never allowed the PNP to be used as partisan politics."

Senior Supt. Fidel Posadas, Cruise police chief, said the police would submit evidence on the abuse of authority case filed against Castillo.

The Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) has been pushing for significant reforms in employment and socio-economic development of the country. Recent developments at the wage front have only emphasized the urgent need for the organization to lead in articulating and defining the advocacies that would impact on the policy and market environments inhibiting the generation of wealth and jobs.

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20 March 2007, Tuesday — Day 1

Plenary Session 1:
The Changing Business and Employment Environment

Plenary Session 2:
Entrepreneurship and Employment
Topic 1: A Road Map for Emerging Entrepreneurs
Topic 2: Moving the Informal Sector to Mainstream Business

Plenary Session 3:
Learning from Competitiveness Models that Work
Topic 1: We're in this Together: Employer-Employee Partnership
Topic 2: Giving Back to Society: Business-Community Partnership
Topic 3: The Road Not Taken: Small Enterprise-Big Enterprise Partnership

Panel Discussion
"Pushing Labor Market Reforms through Win-Win Legislations"

21 March 2007, Wednesday — Day 2

- Presentation of Agenda on Competitiveness and Productivity
- Closing Ceremonies
- Announcement of KAMPI 2007 Awards Winners
- Presidential Address

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Rev. Ricardo F. Lazatin, OMMI	Faculty of Sacred Theology
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Marichel F. Magnaye	Faculty of Civil Law
Arlee Lucio P. Cruz	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Randy M. Dela	Faculty of Pharmacy
Tracy Ann P. Cabrera	Faculty of Arts and Letters
Joyce Ann V. Tan	Faculty of Engineering
Kristine T. Castro	College of Education
Maria Lysandra R. Ferrer	College of Science
Maria Veronique B. Bataan	College of Architecture
Sheryll Anne S. Go	College of Commerce and Business Administration
Heliodoro B. Fiel II	Conservatory of Music
Hilarious E. de Jesus	College of Nursing
Ariel Vincent B. Segovia	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
Katrina Ann C. Tan	College of Fine Arts and Design
Roselyn L. Ramores	AMV College of Accountancy
Josephine Fatima V. Cabang	Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Louie Matt R. Medina	UST High School
Frances Bernadette P. Dizon	Education High School
Jean Bituanon A. de Asis	Elementary School

POPE LEO XIII COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AWARD

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY	
Rev. Ismael S. Sagsagan	Faculty of Sacred Theology
GROUP CATEGORY	
The Theological Society	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Medical Missions, Inc.	
Students Group	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Red Cross Youth Council – Pharmacy Unit	Faculty of Pharmacy
Philippine Association of Nutrition – Omega Chapter (PAN)	College of Education
Psychology Society	College of Science
The Source – Community Unit	College of Commerce and Business Administration
MMI Nursing Group	College of Nursing
Physical Therapy (PT) Society	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
Review for Santo Tomas Scholars Association	Office for Student Affairs

QUEZON LEADERSHIP AWARD

Rev. Dante Julian B. Pagtananan	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Rina A. Bautista	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Paolo F. San Gabriel	Faculty of Arts and Letters
Leonardo F. Sanchez Jr.	College of Education
Christel Immanuel L. Ong	College of Architecture
Pedro C. Tomlin Jr.	College of Commerce and Business Administration
Marylue C. Marcos	College of Nursing
Augusto Ray B. Morales	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
Christopher Paul U. Bravo	College of Fine Arts and Design
Jaime S. Uy	AMV College of Accountancy
Maria Nelsie F. Trapsiste	Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Angelina L. Bisnares	UST High School
Benjamin Jarred T. Sendico	Office for Student Affairs

BENAVIDES OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY	
Alma Cecilia M. Calimoso	College of Education
Kevin Francis U. Ang	College of Science
Joseph John B. Carpio	College of Science
David Joseph L. Alcuaz	College of Science
Antonio M. Tetia Jr.	Graduate School
Raymund M. de Leon	Conservatory of Music
Heliodoro B. Fiel II	Conservatory of Music
Hilarious E. de Jesus	College of Nursing
Dane R. Fix-ar Kate	UST High School
Jean Bituanon A. Cana	UST High School
Jan Aaron P. Corpuz	Elementary School
Jenny O. Baes	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Rowgian B. Mazzeng	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Raymund M. A. Mig-uel	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Jennifer V. Angeles	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Sherylle B. Uy	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Lizzie Melissa G. Marquez	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Almeah Lenie F. Lim	Department of Military Science and Tactics

GROUP CATEGORY	
Iloilo Mon Editorial Staff	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Kristine P. Cuenca, Alexis Ringgo C. Reyes & Jenina Kimberly C. Mercado	College of Education
Psychology Quiz Team	College of Science
College of Architecture Basketball Team	College of Architecture
Arnold Cedric P. Aguinaldo, John Benjamin T. Andres, Tan Lung L. Tan & Jose Angelo G. Silvestre	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
Adrez Singko	College of Fine Arts and Design
IPEA Debate Team	AMV College of Accountancy
UST High School Taekwondo Team	UST High School
UST Grade School Choir	Elementary School
Men's Basketball Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Women's Basketball Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Men's Judo Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Men's Volleyball Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Women's Lawn Tennis Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Women's Chess Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Men's Lawn Tennis Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Women's Swimming Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Women's Taekwondo Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Men's Taekwondo Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Salsangkati Dance Troupe	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Tiger Dragons Rowing Team	Office for Student Affairs
UST NSTP Unit	Department of Military Science and Tactics

ST. DOMINIC DE GUZMAN AWARD

The Theological Society	Faculty of Sacred Theology
UST Law Review	Faculty of Civil Law
Medicine Student Council	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Pharmacy Student Council	Faculty of Pharmacy
Legal Management Society	Faculty of Arts and Letters
Philippine Association of Nutrition – Omega Chapter (PAN)	College of Education
College of Science Student Council	College of Science
Central Committee of the Philippine UST Chapter	College of Architecture
The Junior Chamber of Commerce Administrators (JCIA)	College of Commerce and Business Administration
Nursing Student Council	College of Nursing
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The caves of Bathala

By Gerald Gene R. Quevedo
Sta. Cruz, Marinduque

A POPULAR PLACE OF RELIGIOUS cults, the prehistoric Bathala Caves occupy 19 hectares of land, 700 meters above sea level, in Barangay Ipil, about 10 kilometers from Sta. Cruz town proper in Marinduque.

It is a system of predominantly eight caves named Church, Saraot, Python, Cemetery, Lilim, Underground, River and Key Wonder. Other caves have yet to be explored and named.

The biggest, "Kuweba ng Simbahan" (Cave of the Church), was used as a worshipping area and could have been the dwelling area of the early inhabitants of the island province. It is believed to be the home of tatung Bathala, the Supreme God of the Tagalogs.

Its main cavern is well ventilated and big enough to accommodate 300 people.

"Edible shells abound on the floor near the cave's entrance that could have formed part of the meals of the dwellers," said Cipriano Rico, adventure science instructor at the Marinduque State College and environmentalist.

A hundred meters from the Church is a burial site, known as the Cemetery Cave.

According to a research paper of 61 1980s Boxer-titled "Outline Review of Philippine Archaeology by Islands and Provinces," among the artifacts found in the caves were earthen jars, pieces of china jars and coffin fragments and human ashes, including 13 skulls that were all collected and brought to Manila by archaeologist Alfredo Evangelista.

Rock formations

Cebu believes that signs of wonderful things to come have been registered in the cave by Bathala. As the main entrance, they say are the looming faces of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Victor Bigaldean, a cult leader who has stayed in the cave for over a decade, explained that Amang Bathala placed His engraved face in that position to remind everyone that He always watches over His children.

On the ceiling of the main hall is a figure of what appears to be a dove, its wings spread on flight. This, the cults say, is the Holy Spirit.

At the right wing is an image of what they claim is a crying Mary. Below the tip of the tail is a big stalagmite called the Altar. Facing the entire figure is a silhouette of what the cult members see as the Virgin Mary and Christ the King.

On the cave floor is a stone formation of what looks like a man lying down. It is Christ in the Sepulcher; the soldiers say. Other images include the "Crucifixion" and a deformed face of an apparent Mexicano mask that some say belongs to the suffering Christ.

Now the "crying Mary" is a bell shaped stalactite that is said to ring every midnight of Good Friday.

A big boulder at the rear of the cave looks like a boat that, cult members say, is the Ark of Noah.

Refuge

The Bathala area is refuge of the Pulahanes, who stayed to pay homage to their Supreme God and to regain the presence of their ancestors.

A theatrical group in Leyte founded by Sanskrit elders, an illiterate peasant who assumed the title of Hapa, once a century ago, the Pulajan Movement believed that their ancestors could protect them from the bullets of their declared enemies—the American colonizers and their Filipino allies.

In the early 1900s, hundreds of members of the Samahang Ilahang Pamana Sole Dios, which was founded by Apolito Bautistahan, stayed in the cave for quite a long time.

The group was formed in Mount Banahaw in Quezon and still maintains a center there. It believes that Banahaw and Bathala Cave are "spiritually connected."

The Python Cave has only one entrance that is guarded by at least 11 pythons. More snakes are found on its second floor.

Although pythons are believed to be dangerous and aggressive, those at the cave have never harmed visitors. In fact, they could be photographed at close as one foot away, according to local beliefs, the pythons are pets of Bathala.

Enchanted pythons

"This is my first time to see the pythons in the solid and it's great to get near them. This is a different experience that visitors will enjoy," said World Wide Fund for Nature media officer Gregg Yan.

Ahmen Kuwen, doctor Kuwen Gonbaw, who claims the cave system on Dec. 10 last year as the height of Tagalogan "Awakening," said it was worth exploring. "It has a lot to offer visitors. The highlight of my visit is to see the pythons that dwelled in the cave."

Emilio Quevedo, provincial environment and natural resources officer, chief the hide as one of the best-among those seven he has visited in the country.

"It is rich in biodiversity and I am happy that the locals were responsible enough not to harm the animals inside the cave," he said. According to him, it is proof that man and the wild can coexist and live in harmony.

In his research paper titled "An Inquiry on the Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Bathala Cave," Rico noted stories that the Bathala cave system emerged from the depths of the ocean.

He suggested further studies on it, which holds many other "beautiful" stories, in order to insure cultural conservation initiatives.

THE MARINDUQUE Youth Initiatives Orgs, a conservation group, is organizing a natural tour and pilgrimage on April 2-3 to the Bathala Caves. It will celebrate the Marinduque Festival during the Holy Week. For inquiries, contact (0919) 248-2769 or e-mail mpyo@yahoo.com.

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THE PYTHONS Cave is explored by World Wide Fund for Nature media officer Gregg Yan. EDWARD DAVID QUEVEDO

More than a heart-shaped province in heart of country

By Gerald Gene R. Quevedo
Boac, Marinduque

MARINDUQUE RESIDENTS are dismayed by reports that many Filipinos don't know where the province is although it was proclaimed separate from Tayabas (now Quezon province) 107 years ago.

Legislative Act No. 2000 declared the split official on Feb. 23, 1920.

Many people still think that the province is situated in the Visayas or in Mindoro. Internet Wikipedia Inquirer.Net, a social science tournament at the Marinduque State College.

"It is no embarrassing to come across those who even think that the Moriones Festival is held in Mindoro and not in our province," he adds.

Inquirer notes that some people learned about the province only during the Metropoint mine spill tragedy in 1996 or after the devastating late last year from Superintendent "Bilbao" and "Tatang."

Ricardo "Dindo" Asuncion, author of the collectible book "Marinduque: The Heart of the Philippines," believes that Marinduque deserves wider air "Decalcot of the mind." He is a researcher of the Tourism Task Force of the provincial government that published the 229-page book in 2004.

Asuncion lamented that by a provincial twist of nature, Marinduque was laid out at the bosom of the Philippine archipelago, right smack in its geographical heart.

He describes the province as serene, intricate and silent coated sheltered waters within a secluded quarter ringed and protected by neighboring provinces in Southern Tagalog.

And as if to return for all the kind attention and pampering, the islands land mass rolled and shaped itself into a heart.

Place, people

The 960-square kilometer province is located about 150 nautical miles south of Manila and is bounded by Quezon on the north, the Bondoc Peninsula on the east, Romblon on the south, and Occidental Mindoro on the west.

It is composed of six municipalities: Boac, the capital town; Sta. Cruz, the largest town in area and population; Torrijos; Mogpog; Gasan and Buenavista.

Asuncion believes that the Marinduqueños' warmth and hospitality seem to reach the heart and soul of anyone.

Visitors who set foot on the island get the assurance that they are being treated, not as visitors, but as one of the islanders' own.

Marinduqueños, according to tourists, will go out of their way to make them feel at home.

Marinduqueños are known for their "pasiking." The ritual of songs and dances is the people's way of showing warmth and hospitality.

Peaceful, clean

Marinduque has been rated consistently as the most peaceful province in Southern Tagalog and second only to Batanes, countrywide.

Its isolation, small size and resulting population density, together with the prosecuting vision of its inhabitants, contribute to this enviable record.

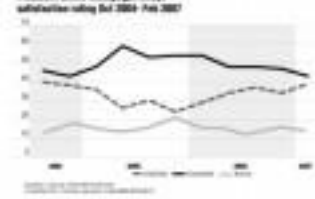
Despite the negative impact brought about by the Marcopper mine spill tragedy in 1996, Marinduque became a Hall of Fame Awardee in 2000, for having won the annual Clean and Green Area Performance Province in the Southern Tagalog for three consecutive years since 1999.

In 2002 and 2003, Marinduque again got the best Performance Award considering the record in the years in a row.

The annual award is given by the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

SWS: GMA rating improves but still negative

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo satisfaction rating Oct 2004- Feb 2007



From page A1

by Isagani Yambot, Marlowe Hernandez and Jocelyn Montemayor

This is Mr Arroyo's best score since October 2004, when her (net) satisfaction rating was +37, according to surveys by Social Weather Stations.

The President's net score of +4 in the SWS survey for the first quarter is a "slight improvement" from her +11 rating (14 percent satisfied, 47 percent dissatisfied) in December last year.

The net satisfaction rating is the difference between the percentage of satisfied and dissatisfied.

The survey was conducted on Feb. 24-27 using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the balance of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The results were part of SWS' regular quarterly survey and were not commissioned. No polling group said.

Unpopularity due to reforms

Mr Arroyo told reporters on Tuesday her unpopularity was due to her pushing economic reform programs, including a drive to increase government revenues through an expanded value-added tax.

The President was all smiles yesterday after the SWS survey showed her satisfaction rating had slightly improved.

"Well, ain't can say is that if you do what is right and you do your best, God will take care of the rest," Mr Arroyo said during her unscheduled lecture.

She reiterated that she had to make tough decisions to steer the economy at the cost of her popularity.

Worth it

Mr Arroyo pointed out that among the fruits of her policies were the provision of more social services to the poor such as Philhealth insurance and the lowering of the cost of rentes and other utilities. One of her guests at yesterday's roundtable had his service bill reduced by P500, she said.

"I think all the sacrifices we made, which made me very unpopular, were well worth it," she said.

The country congressional elections are scheduled for May 14. Although the presidency is not being contested, Mr Arroyo fears the prospect of an opposition-dominated Senate.

Impeachment motion

She is likely to remain in control of the House of Representatives, although if the opposition gets one-third of the seats, it will be able to force an impeachment motion against her.

Reliable sources say P10 million for television ads during the first two weeks of the campaign, according to a study by Nielsen Media Research, to woo him the votes. "Mr. Big Spender."

Villar and Recto, who spent over P30 million and P12 million, respectively, during the period also posted gains in the Inbel Pulse Asia survey. *Jobe Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

Arroyo's net satisfaction rating is the difference between the percentage of satisfied and dissatisfied.

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Loren tops poll; Roco zooms up

From page A1

senatorial winners."

They were in the 12th to 15th places, according to results of a national survey on Filipinos' senatorial preferences that Pulse Asia released yesterday.

The survey was conducted from Feb. 26 to March 5 using face-to-face interviews with a multistage probability sample of 1,800 adults aged 18 and above in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

It had a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points at the 90-percent confidence level.

The survey was not commissioned by any party, Pulse Asia said in a statement.

Biggest gainers

Roco, widow of former Sen. Raul Roco, gained 14.9 percentage points—up from the 7.1 percent of voters who said they would vote for her in the last survey on Jan. 23-29.

She rose from between 27th and 44th places to between 12th and 15th places.

Defensor, who ranked between 15th and 28th places in January, gained 7 percentage points. Magsaysay was not included in the previous survey.

Roco belongs to the Genuine Opposition (GO) ticket, while Magsaysay and Defensor belong to the administration's Team Unity (TU) slate.

56.8% for Loren

Opposition candidate Loren Legarda continued to lead the 98 senatorial aspirants on the Pulse Asia list, with more than half (56.8 percent) of voting-age Filipinos rooting for her.

In the second and third rater (12 contenders in list, Panfilo Lacson (48.1 percent) and re-electionist Sen. Ramon Magsaysay (39.4 percent), who is running as an independent candidate.

They were followed by Senators Rep. Prospero Pichay (35.5 percent), reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto (35.1 percent) and Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. (29 percent). Re-electionist Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile (28.6 percent) rounded out the "Final Dozen" (TF) slate.

Fourth to 18th places

With possible ranks of 4th to 18th were re-electionist Sen. Juker Arroyo (TU, 24.5 percent), Cotabato Rep. Bongbong "Bongoy" Aquino III (GO, 24.2 percent) and re-electionist Sen. Edgardo Angara (TU, 22.1 percent). Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano ranked between 5th and 11th (GO, 20.9 percent).

Former Senators Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan (Independent, 17.5 percent) and Vicente "Tito" Sotto III (TU, 15.4 percent) ranked between 12th and 12th, and 16th and 17th, respectively.

Also with a statistical chance of winning a Senate seat were GO candidates Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III (12.1 percent) and former Sen. John Osmeña (11.9 percent), who both ranked between 12th and 18th.

Facing the survey, about two months before the May elections, registered voters were choosing 7 out of a minimum of 12 names to elect as senatorial candidates. Picker does not.

Twelve seats are up for grabs in the 24-member Senate.

Other gainers

Other gainers in the survey included Escudero, who moved an additional 12.3 percentage points (from 10.2 percent in January to 22.5 percent in March) to rise from between 26th and 34th places, and Aquino, who gained 11.7 percentage points (from 22.5 percent to 34.2 percent) to rise from between 6th and 15th places to between 5th and 10 places.

Legarda gained 10.2 percentage points (from 46.6 percent to 56.8 percent) to retain her No. 1 rank. Recto gained 9.2 percentage points (from 26 percent to 35.2 percent) to rise from rank 5-14 to 3-10. Arroyo gained 6.7 percentage points (from 25.8 percent to 34.5 percent) to rise from rank 5-14 to 4-10.

Villar gained 8.6 percentage points (from 20.4 percent to 29 percent), to rise from rank 9-16 to 8-16, and Angara, who gained 8.1 percentage points (from 14 percent to 31.1 percent) to rise from rank 5-14 to 4-10.

Losing ground

Cayetano's team of support declined slightly by 6.9 percentage points (from 31.9 percent on 24.9 percent). Its overall, his rank dropped from 5-7 to 5-11.

Enrile saw also losing ground (5.4 percentage points). Those who said they would vote for him declined from 28.6 percent to 23.2 percent, causing his rank to drop from 4-11 to 11-17.

Honasan gained 4 percentage points (from 22.2 percent to 27.2 percent), but his rank dropped from 6-14 to 12-18.

Zobel and Pichay

Among the big gainers who did not make it to the list of "probable winners" were administration candidates Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri and Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay.

Zubiri gained 8.9 percentage points (from 10.3 percent to 19.2 percent) to the final rank 20-37 to 13-16. Pichay gained 8.1 percentage points (from 5.8 percent to 13.7 percent) to rise from rank 34-51 to 19-23.

Reliable sources some P10 million for television ads during the first two weeks of the campaign, according to a study by Nielsen Media Research, to woo him the votes. "Mr. Big Spender."

Villar and Recto, who spent over P30 million and P12 million, respectively, during the period also posted gains in the Inbel Pulse Asia survey. *Jobe Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

Rating in Metro drops

With 55 percent of the respondents in Metro Manila saying they were dissatisfied with the President's performance and 20 percent saying they were satisfied, Mr Arroyo's net Approval rating in the metropolis dropped to -34 for month from -16 last November.

However, it turned from negative to positive among residents of classes ABC, from -24 to November to +7 (44 percent satisfied, 37 percent dissatisfied) in the latest survey.

The President's net approval rating also improved to "neutral" from negative in Luzon outside Metro Manila (from -9 to -2).

Her net rating in the Visayas rose from -7 to -4.1. It improved from -11 to 0 in Mindanao.

Luzon, Mindanao

In Luzon outside Metro Manila, 40 percent said they were satisfied with the President, while 42 percent said they were dissatisfied, in the Visayas, 41 percent were satisfied and 46 percent, dissatisfied.

In Mindanao, some 42 percent said they were satisfied while 41 percent said they were not.

Mr Arroyo's net approval rating in urban areas also improved from -22 to -8 in the latest survey, with 37 percent saying they were satisfied with the President and 45 percent saying they were dissatisfied with her.

It likewise slightly improved from -7 to +1 in rural areas. *Reports from Aine Pedroso, Inquirer Research, and Aijaz Ladog, Jaculbia and AP and Reuters*

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

GLOBE TELECOM

SPORTS

Jacobs, Paner lead PBA Hall of Fame bets

By Musong R. Carillo

RON JACOBS, THE FORMER LOYOLA AT Marymount mentor who revolutionized coaching in the Philippine basketball association, and Manny Paner, one of the 1980s' shooters extraordinaire, were nominated along with 12 others to the league's Hall of Fame.

Jacobs engineered the first-ever sweep in a best-of-seven title series in the PBA, guiding steamer squad Northern Consolidated past Manilabrew in the Reinforced Conference 19-rank in 1985 before setting the standard in bench tactics a few years later with San Miguel Beer.

That great skipper also earned a nomination for business tycoon Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, who bankrolled Northern Consolidated in several international competitions.

Paner rounds out 4-foot-2 but was the first owner and player to earn round a formative salary in the league—P6,000 a month in the mid-1970s—while playing for San Miguel.

Also nominated were Norman Black and Glenn McDonald, two great imports of different eras who led their respective teams to championships.

BLACK

JACOBS

The final selection will be held on April 8 after the Honors Committee deliberates for the last time on March 20.

Also nominated were late commissioner Maggay Ferguson and Rony Henares, former Toyota coach Dante Silverio, founding league president Dominga Icban, Bailey guard Danny Florencio, former MVPs Alberto Bolaños and other Goldstars and deceased sports editor Tony Siddayao.

The Honors Committee is made up of PBA chair Ricky Vargas, vice chair Tony Chua, former chair Fly Cuparts, Joaquin Trillo, PBA commissioner Noli Eala, Freddie Webb, two members each from the print and broadcast media, and former commissioner Jun Bernardino.

The nominations committee is comprised of Peter Punzalan, who served as chair, Pilo Gaston, columnists Quintin Briones and Ronnie Nathoniels, Sempio's Tito Yatco, PBA basketball operations head Ogie Santos, technical committee chief Percy Manlawe, and media heroes Boom Willy Marshal.

ALL PEEK of Coca-Cola gets fouled by Talk 'N Text guard Patrick Fran on his way to the hoop.

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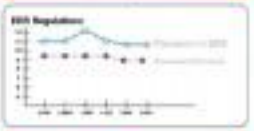

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Phone Pals rip Tigers

GAME 1 (Game 4) (Alonte Gym, Pampanga)
Tip-off — Alaska vs Red Bull

By Musong R. Carillo

SAN MIGUEL BEER, ALREADY a franchise without a franchise player, found out again the hard way that it has an import who simply can't play like one.

San Miguel's sorry state took some of the luster away from Arizona 88-76 decision of the Brewmen last night that sealed the Express' best-ever tournament start in the PBA while also giving them a piece of the early 9-one Cup lead at the Asunción Coliseum.

The final score failed to reflect the fact that the Express were in control from the second quarter on, as San Miguel did not get anyone to go after Vidal Mamiit who went scoreless in 15 minutes and failed to contribute to his team's cause.

"Not really, but it's a factor," Air-21 coach Bo Pinlac said when asked if San Miguel being deprived lessened his team's achievement. "It's a small token (Francisco's best ever start), but in five years, we've never really been able to accomplish this."

Gary David impressed for the Express with 22 points, Arwind Santos scored 16 and complemented a double-double with 14 boards as Air21 climbed into a momentary tie for the lead with Red Bull and Alaska at 2-0.

Dondon Gabino scorched 17 points and Wesley Gonzales had 12, but none really played big enough for San Miguel (0-2) to threaten the Express, who assumed control in the second period and took the half, 46-37.

San Miguel played without national team opponents Danny Seigle and Dondon Hontiveros and injured starters Jimmy Bitoy-Gonzales and Lordy Tugade. Rod Medallion, a former Loyola at Illinois standout, is reportedly serving as coach Binky's aide.

While San Miguel fizzled for a go-to guy, the same was evidently different for Talk 'N Text in the first game.

JJ Sullinger scored 19 points in the third period and a total of 35, and Ugay Billones came off the bench to shoot of his 12 in the fourth that powered the Phone Pals to a 130-87 victory over Coca-Cola.

Their performance hardly made anyone notice the unscathed by three stalwarts who are out to carry the National Team as the Phone Pals rebounded from a loss in their debut to improve to 1-1 while dumping the Tigers the side hard.

Coca-Cola seized leaders in stride in the fourth period, as it's 73-74 deficit at the start of the quarter ballooned to irreversible proportions right in its early minutes that made the Tigers drink their loss in three games.

The scores:

First Game

TALK 'N TEXT (88)—Sullinger 35, Washington 15, Williams 12, Ebona 10, Cardona 6, Cuntapay 5, Belencion 5, Yap 2, Pinto 0.

COCA-COLA (87)—Johnson 28, Arigo 17, Pratt 14, Arenas 11, Yee 2, Avila 0, Mendoza 0, Lacsina 0, Miranda 0, Arredondo 0, Mercado 0.

Quarters: 28-25, 44-46, 74-73, 130-87

Second Game

ARIZA (88)—Rosell 22, Santos 18, Estrada 17, Mier 12, De la Alfonsia 6, Caramia 4, Dimaculangan 4, Tenorio 4, Arroyo 2, Bernardo 0.

SAN MIGUEL (76)—Gabino 17, Gonzales 12, Wilson 10, Adamos 9, Bautista 11, Pinto 2, Taimanglo 5, Calaguio 5, Mercader 0, Adriano 0, Rodriguez 0.

Quarters: 19-23, 46-37, 76-88, 88-76

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil
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1 dead, 3 hurt in Manila diner ambush

Unidentified men shoot victims out on lunch break

By Allison W. Lopez

A HANUNAH KILLED PEOPLE THREE OF his companions were hurt when unidentified gunmen opened fire on them as they were eating at a roadside diner in Manila at around 11:30 a.m. yesterday.

Ricardo Efrelia was declared dead on arrival at the Hospital ng Maynila while Williams Raymundo, Romeo Efrelia and Griselda Orbet were wounded. Their two other companions, Jhun Que and Homero Ando, Efrelia, were unhurt.

Raymundo's relatives were reportedly anxious. Nida later told the police that Raymundo was planning to run for barangay of Tuloc, Alava in the May elections. Ricardo, the brother of Romeo and Jhun, was his bodyguard.

The incident took place at Efrelia's roadside canteen beside the LCE building owned by Sheza Sta. Ana Lee. Lee "Charlie" Singson on San Andres corner Dimasalang streets in Manila.

Initial investigation showed that the three unidentified men surrounded the victims and shot them while they were eating.

Rito Ortacero, the canteen owner, said that after the shooting, one of the suspects grabbed Nida's bag and bracelet and then fled on board a motorcycle.

Chief Insp. Alex Tinagalog of the Manila Police District homicide division said the bracelet was worth P75,000.

LCE Building security guard Joffrey Solanes said the victims had just left the building several minutes before the incident. He recognized Que, he added, because she was a frequent visitor.

Solanes added that he rushed immediately outside the building when he heard the gunshots, but the suspects had already fled.

"Everything was over in 10 to 15 seconds," Solanes said.

On Dec. 16, 2006, Alva Rep. Luis Bernardo was shot dead outside a Quezon City church after attending a wedding. The province was later declared an area of immediate concern by the Commission on Elections after Gov. Vicente Veloso was linked by a suspect to Bernardo's murder. The suspect, however, later recanted his testimony.

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DPWH junks mayors' plea on bridge repair

By Leila B. Salaverria

DIVERING PUBLIC SAFETY, THE DEpartment of Public Works and Highways rejected the plea of mayors of the Cotabato area (Cotabato, Midsayap, Kidapawan and Matanog) to postpone the rehabilitation of the Tulunan bridge in Midsayap for two months.

DPWH Secretary Manuel Bonoan said the department would just improve the traffic rerouting scheme by adding more alternative routes. A rerouting scheme will be in place when the Tulunan Bridge is fully or partially closed to traffic for the rehabilitation work.

But he added that the repairs could no longer be delayed.

"We cannot postpone it because public safety is at stake. We cannot compromise public safety," Bonoan said in a phone interview when asked about the mayors' request contained in a letter.

He said the mayors—Bernardo Ederoso of Midsayap, Toby Tinagacs of Matanog, Malabato Garcia Cornia and Jimrexin Guerrabino of Kidapawan—are aware of the DPWH's stand on the importance of rehabilitating the 73-year-old Tulunan bridge that connects Maguindanao, Midsayap and Mindanao Avenue.

The DPWH wants the bridge repaired immediately because its steel parts are already corroded.

By Friday, the bridge would either be partially or fully closed in preparation for the repair work, and the new traffic rerouting scheme would be tested.

According to Bonoan, the DPWH has been working with local government units to add more routes that vehicles could use as alternative routes.

The final traffic rerouting scheme would be ready by Friday, he said.

Asked about reports that the earlier dry run of a traffic rerouting scheme resulted in massive traffic jams, Bonoan said that was usually the case when new traffic routes are implemented. But he added that people will eventually have to get used to new traffic schemes.

The Cotabato mayors sought the 60-day reprieve in the Tulunan Bridge's closure to give them more time to address traffic concerns that would arise from the closure.

They said the dry run showed that the earlier routes designated as alternatives could not accommodate the huge volume of vehicles that use the bridge.

Prosecutor loses bid to cite Leviste, docs for contempt

By DJ Yap

A MAKATI COURT JUDGE YESTERDAY A motion by the prosecution in the former Batangas Gov. Jose Antonio Leviste and his doctors for contempt for allegedly conspiring to extend his stay in the hospital.

Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 said the motion by Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco to cite Leviste for contempt was "invalid" because it has no legal substance."

Also covered by the motion were physicians Fortunato Isada and Reuben Librero, who, along with Leviste, were accused of "belittling, degrading, obstructing, interrupting and embarrassing" the court. Alameda said the motion was considered moot by Leviste's return to the Makati City Jail last Saturday.

The contempt proceedings stemmed from a court order dated March 6 directing the Makati City jail warden to take custody of Leviste after his discharge from the Makati Medical Center.

At the time of the filing of Velasco's motion, Leviste, charged with the murder of his lover, Time aide Rafael de los Reyes, was still in the hospital where he was being treated for hypertension and gastrointestinal bleeding.

Velasco argued that the doctors had failed to file a report that Leviste would be discharged within 72 hours. Alameda noted, however, that the doctors did not categorically state when Leviste could leave the hospital.

"Besides, it's a difference of only two days," he said.

Velasco, on the other hand, said he would file a motion for reconsideration, which would include the management of the MMC as respondent. The court also partied a motion by Leviste to defer his March 21 arraignment pending the resolution of his application for bail. Another motion by Leviste for his wife Michelle Enriquez from the city jail to the MMC, or as an alternative, the city was kept taking Michael, was submitted for resolution.

Melanie visits Binay, but it isn't what you think

By DJ Yap

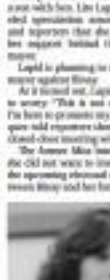
NOT A FEW HEADS TURNED WHEN beauty queen turned actress Melanie Marquez made a surprise appearance at the Makati City Hall yesterday for a private audience with Mayor Jejomar Binay.

The presence of Marquez, who has a son with him, Lee Lapid, quickly fueled speculation among employees and reporters that she would throw her support behind the incumbent mayor.

Lapid is planning to run for Makati mayor against Binay.

As it turned out, Lapid had no need to worry. "This is not about politics. I'm here to promote my church," Marquez said reporters shortly before her closed-door meeting with Binay.

The former Miss International said she did not want to involve herself in the upcoming electoral showdown between Binay and her former partner.



No politics for Melanie. MARK CRISTINO

"I won't be campaigning. I won't even be here during the elections. My family and I will be in the United States," she said.

Asked who between the two would get her support, Marquez only said: "Recommend."

Later, during Binay's regular Wednesday press conference, the mayor said he and Marquez only talked about a dental and medical mission being proposed by the church she belongs to, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

According to Binay, the city health office referred the proposal as it did not comply with an existing ordinance requiring the prior screening of physicians and dentists who would participate in the mission.

"I explained to her that we do not prohibit the holding of free medical and dental missions, but we regulate them to guard against unprofessional practices," he said. "We never talked about Lapid."

At the same press conference, the mayor said he believes Lapid would have a hard time courting Makati voters, since city residents had questioned his absences in favor of trips and social leaders.

"The voters here are intelligent. Which is not to say intelligent voters won't vote for him, but rather, they would opt for someone who has a good track record," he said in a mix of English and Filipino.

He added that Lapid's ascension would be divisive, as his son Binay would have a hard time defending his gubernatorial seat in his hometown of Bonquegas. "I feel it. Like most places in Luzon, we might win. You have to give that to him," said Binay, who is also president of the United Opposition.

No stopping depot closure—Atienza

By Allison W. Lopez

MEETING WITH OIL EXECUTIVES YESterday, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said he refused his "final answer" in enforcing Ordinance No. 8027 closing the Pandacan depot.

"I told them that the only option I'm open to is the same reasoning put forward in 2000 that it would be impossible to close the depot. That was six years ago. The industry should be able to say 'we can relocate ourselves,'" he said.

Petron spokesperson Virginia Bautista said the mayor explained to them their position, and that he had no choice but to implement the law. "So what we will do is go back to our respective boards and assess our situation," she said.

On Monday, the oil companies filed a motion for leave to intervene in the Ordinance No. 8027 case decided by the Supreme Court last week. Bautista said the motion "might have an impact on the relocation timetable."

Atienza said the file for leave would not affect his position. "They filed the motion even if I was the respondent in the case. That is their legal remedy, but it should not change our position in any way," he said.

In a previous interview, Atienza said they were considering Harbour Centre off Manila Bay to finally act on of their choices. This time, however, she said she could not confirm since it was just "an option."

Mayor Atienza also denied specifying Lim Ket Kai Cities as the new site, clarifying that he was not for putting the depot beside the Bay but not necessarily in Harbour Centre.

"That is due subway plan for an all-dependency. That is how it happened and Hong Kong did it," he said.

The other day, Councilor Benjamin Asilo pushed the Hadassa Garden proposal, saying that new Smokey Mountain dump, also in Tondo, was enough of a problem for residents.

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ATTY. EMMANUEL F. DE LOYOLA
Chairman, PSALM Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee

Suspected drug pushers nabbed

By Jeannette I. Andrade

AGENTS OF THE PHILIPPINE DRUG Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (AIDSOTF) of the Philippine National Police arrested a Taiwanese and two Filipinos suspected of distributing shabu and ketamine both here and abroad on Tuesday night.

The suspects were identified as Chen-Tien Chang, 51, also known as Dindo Tien Chan and Joseph Sin, Fu-shih Hsieh, 36, and Gaur Salenaida, 34.

Agents arrested Chen and Escobio inside Unit 805 of Chino Plaza on Tomhaven Street in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Gaur was later arrested in his house in Novaliches, Quezon City.

Seized from Chen and Escobio were 996.3 milligrams worth of drugs consisting of three kilos of ketamine powder, 112 grams of shabu, assorted drug paraphernalia, drug packaging equipment, nearly P50,000 in cash and several checks.

According to the police, Chen has been hiding in the country to evade arrest after a warrant was issued against him by the Ilo-Ilo City Regional Trial Court for his involvement in a gang rape case. Escobio, on the other hand, has a pending warrant for his arrest on drug pushing charges. The warrant was issued by a court in Bulacan.

In a press conference, PDEA chief Director Santiago said the three were previously arrested for selling ketamine. They were later released after the charges against them were dropped.

INVITATION TO BID

Pre-Bid Conference: 20 March 2007, 10:00 AM at the PSALM Office

Bid Submission Deadline: 29 July 2007, 12:00 noon at the PSALM Office

TROs for sale at Court of Appeals?

CHIEF JUSTICE REYNATO PUNO HAS ordered the Court of Appeals to report to him the number of temporary restraining orders (TROs) the appellate court has issued since January this year.

Puno has been irked by reports that TROs and decisions by the appellate court could be bought.

My spy at the Court of Appeals says that a TRO costs a minimum of P500,000 and commissions of P30,000 for...

A permanent injunction, which is more powerful and binding than a TRO, costs much, much more, according to my spy.

My uncle at the Supreme Court told me earlier that Chief Justice was planning to abolish the appellate court boards in Cebu and Davao all in response to recent Ma. Makati. That was after he learned that most of the justices at the Court of Appeals (CA) could be bought.

This column has suggested that the Chief Justice not only beat down hard on CA-Cebu but even the whole Court of Appeals, including the one in Cagayan de Oro.

* * *

There is a note in the P113-million oil smuggling and tax evasion cases exposed in this space last week.

It turned out that one of the accused, Norman Galoria, is now crying foul for being named the accountant in the crime even if it was he who initiated the complaint against Chief Intelligence Group...

Former Pasil Co and fellow brokers Noel Ang and Belinda Valenzuela.

"I pity Galoria, Mom," said a source. "He just wanted to do a good turn for his country, and yet he's become like Aesa Ramirez," said a source.

Aesa Ramirez was a Landbank executive who was indicted for one of the accused in a lineup for the media by President Macapagal-Arroyo even if it was she who blew the whistle on a scam to the bank.

Galoria, who manages a brokerage firm along with Noel and Valenzuela, went to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) to admit that his firm had been helping Go smuggle oil by the hundreds of millions of pesos since 2003.

He also provided documents and classified the alleged modus operandi. Galoria said he came out because he felt he was being used by Aesa and Valenzuela.

But instead of hailing him as a hero, the CIDG charged him as an accomplice.

Galoria, like Ramirez, must have been realized that there is no justice under the Arroyo administration.

* * *

I'm a firm believer in the universal law of karma. You reap what you sow.

If you do harm to your fellowman, the harm you have will sooner or later come back to you.

Conversely, if you do your fellowman a good turn, your deed will to...

No karmic debt in this world ever goes unpaid.

Likewise, the tools of information technology anyone can destroy another person's reputation simply by using the Internet or circulating a "white paper."

I sympathize with those who are at the receiving end of such attacks. I, too, have been the victim of malicious gossip and fabricated charges.

The subject of gossip can console himself with the thought that the one responsible for spreading it will sooner or later have the same bitter experience he's having now.

ON TARGET

RAMAN DAÑO

METROBRIEFS

2 killed in Manila fire

ONE WOMAN took to save her grandson's life, but in the end, both of them died in the attempt. Mary Grace Camacho, 36, and her 80-year-old grandmother, Genoveva Panchitanes, died in the fire that broke out in their two-storey house in Barangay Antonio Enverga Subdivision, Manila yesterday afternoon. "She found their bodies at the bottom of the stairs," Mary Grace's husband Jerome Camacho, Manila police investigation section chief, said. Jerome said Mary Grace had left behind an unnamed maid in the burning structure. The blaze, began at 12:25 p.m. and ended at 1:30. The fire, also known as Task Force Alpha, was put out by Manila firefighters at 1:03 p.m. Fire officials have said that the cause of the fire is still under investigation. — Allison W. Lopez

Close call

A HOUSE owned by Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. in Barrio Obrero was saved minimal damage after a blaze broke out in his neighbor's house yesterday afternoon. The fire broke out in the second floor of the house owned by Pimentel's neighbor, Rachel Tandoc, at 3 Gabriel Street Barrio Subdivision, said Barrio Obrero fire marshal, Chief Insp. Antonio Rivera. Rivera also said that the fire that was put out after minutes and before it could spread to neighboring houses. Police said the fire only damaged the backyard fence exterior the roof of Pimentel's house and parts of the roof. — Aries C. Rufo

Spiritual seminar

AN INTRODUCTORY seminar on spiritual healings from the Rosenkreuz Mission will be held in Quezon City and all are invited to attend the free event. The seminar will be conducted from March 19 to 11 at La Casa Real, Valle Verde Country Club, Pasig City, by a team from the Arizona-based Temple of the Presence. The focus of the seminar is "Spiritual Healing for Peace and Abundance." Interested persons may call 9327-0496/0497 or 0918-8676/0946 and 891-1606/8931. — Aries C. Rufo

DID YOU KNOW

PHILCOA in Bataan, Quezon City stands for Philippine Coconut Authority. It's the state government agency tasked to oversee the development of coconut and other palm oil industries. Philcoa, which holds office on the city's Elliptical road, was created in 1973 by Presidential Decree 232 as an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture.

Cyril C. Bacalocos Inquirer Research

Tax raps readied vs Thaksin's relatives

Taiwan students form Nazi movement

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S attorney general recommended that criminal tax-evasion charges be filed against deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's wife, her secretary and her brother, an official said Wednesday.

If the case is accepted by the Bangkok Criminal Court it would mark the first prosecution of those close to Thaksin, who was deposed by a September coup and accused of widespread corruption. Others allegations of wrongdoing are still under investigation.

"The attorney general has ordered a lawsuit be filed," Amphol Thiowsing, spokesperson for the Attorney General's Office told a news conference.

He said the three most prominent defendants to the Attorney General's Office within 10 days or arrest warrants might be issued.

The court would still have to accept the case, and that is usually a formality, said Amphol.

An investigator for the Asset Examination Committee, a panel appointed by the coup leaders to investigate corruption linked to Thaksin's regime, had urged the Attorney General's Office last month to forward the case to the Criminal Court.

The panel found that Pojaman Shinawatra—Thaksin's wife—and her brother Bhanpote Damapong failed to pay about 546 million baht, or about $16 million owned, failing to file current exchange rate, in taxes.

The two would face a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison and a 400,000 baht ($12,200) fine each if convicted on two tax evasion counts for which they will be charged, Amphol said.

The secretary, Kanchanapa Bangthawi, would face a maximum penalty of seven years and a 200,000 baht ($6,100) fine because she is facing only one charge. AP

TAIPEI—A GROUP OF Taiwanese university students has set up a first political movement advocating national unity, strength and curbing immigration, the group's co-founder said Wednesday.

The National Socialist Association currently has 20 paid-up members, with another 600 who have used the group's website to indicate an interest in joining, co-founder Chen Lulin, 24, said.

The site is emblazoned with a Nazi swastika and says the group's ranks are reserved for people "who do not dislike (Adolf) Hitler" the Taiwan-born whose regime systematically murdered six million Jews during World War II.

But Chen, studying for his graduate degree in political science at Taipei's prestigious National Chengchi University, denied he was anti-Jewish, and maintained his intention was to foster greater nationalism in Taiwan, an island of 23 million people off China's southeastern coast.

"My main goal is to develop Taiwan's strength and to foster nationalism among Taiwanese," he said. "I think we have to work hard to nurture traditional Chinese values like Confucianism."

Rafi Vanzieu, director of the Israeli representative office in Taipei, deplored the emergence of the Nazi movement in Taiwan.

"This is an upsetting and worrisome phenomenon," he said. "I believe the educational sector of Taiwan should question itself about how these elements' growing people, some with academic backgrounds, decided to worship the monstrous Adolf Hitler."

While high school and university courses do cover the European experience during World War II, relatively few Taiwanese understand the revulsion—and the reasons for it—that Nazism conjures up in the West.

Older images and iconography have sometimes been used to promote Taiwanese products in Taiwan—including a now-closed Italian-themed restaurant—on the grounds that the German leader symbolised strength.

There is no indigenous Jewish community on the island, and most Taiwanese were confused by distinctions among European populations and religions.

Chen, who said he had taken courses on modern European history in high school and college, told The Associated Press his group would apply to Taiwan's Interior Ministry to be recognized as an official organization. He said the group would hold its inaugural conference in the central city of Taichung on Saturday.

Interior Ministry official Lu Ding-yen said a decision on the group's application would be made after it was established.

"The process for handling the application will be carried out in accordance," he said.

Chen declined to say how many people this group expected for Saturday's meeting, but indicated that many would be high school students. AP

A LARGE Taiwanese advertisement showing a cartoon of a smiling Adolf Hitler supporting Qu'ersuo-made elements space heaters with the English translation of "Declaration of war on the cold front!" printed across the top hangs on the wall of a popular outerwear store, in Taipei. —

ANIMAL PLAY A piglet plays with a tiger cub in a park in Guangzhou, in south China's Guangdong March 13. The tiger cub was abandoned by its mother and is being raised by a zoo. REUTERS

Top US military commander's comments on gays prompt outrage

WASHINGTON—THE TOP U.S. military's top officer called businesses and acts immoral in an interview published Tuesday, sparking outrage among gay rights groups and prompting a debate on a ban on gays openly serving in the military.

The nonmoney passport US Defense Secretary Robert Gates in his "personal opinion" that "homosexuality is not a place here," while reaffirming the Defense Department's duty to carry out the so-called "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

General Peter Pace's remarks set off angry reactions from gay rights advocates and calls by Democratic lawmakers to review the 1993 law that allows gays to serve only if they do not declare their sexual orientation or engage in homosexual conduct.

Pace, the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Chicago Tribune he supported the policy because, "I believe homosexual acts between two individuals are immoral and that we should not condone immoral acts," Pace said. "I do not believe the United States is well served by a policy that says it is OK to be immoral in any way." He later issued a statement that sought to blunt the impact of his comments. "I should have stressed more on my support of the policy and less on my personal moral views," he said.

Asked his view of "don't ask, don't tell," Gates said the Pentagon's recruitment channel, "I think personal opinions really doesn't have a place here." He said it was his responsibility to carry out the law "as effectively as we can. As long as the law is what it is, that's what we'll do." Rep. Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the House of Representatives, said the military "should carefully consider changing their policy." "We need the most talent of people, we need the language skills, we need patriotic Americans who come across the board in our population. We don't need a moral judgment from the chairman of Joint Chiefs," she said, alluding to numerous linguists, especially Arabic speakers, who have been discharged.

Joe Solmonese, president of Human Rights Campaign, said Pace's comments "were irresponsible, offensive and a slap in the face to the gay men and women who are currently serving their country with honor and bravery." The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), another advocacy group that has represented soldiers discharged from the military because of their sexual orientation, demanded an apology. AFP

Angelina Jolie to adopt Vietnamese boy

HO CHI MINH CITY—ANGELINA Jolie was expected to arrive in Vietnam late Wednesday night to adopt a 3-year-old boy, adoption officials said.

Jolie was expected to attend an adoption ceremony with Vietnamese officials in Ho Chi Minh City on Thursday morning, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about the matter.

After she receives the child, Jolie will meet with US consular officials, who must review the adoption before a passport can be issued for the boy.

If all goes according to plan, Jolie could leave the child home by the weekend, officials said.

The boy has been living at the Tam Binh orphanage on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City since he was abandoned at a hospital as an infant, according to adoption officials.

Shortly after he arrived at the orphanage, the Tam Binh staff tried unsuccessfully to locate the boy's birth parents.

The boy is healthy. Friendly and a little bit shy, they said. He gets along well with other children and loves to play soccer.

Jolie filed adoption papers as a single parent, because she and her supreme partner Brad Pitt, which is based close to the Ho Chi Minh City Ministry of Justice, where Thursday's adoption ceremony is expected to be held.

Jolie is a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and has traveled extensively to countries in the developing world.

Her 2003 film "Beyond Borders" was filmed in Cambodia, which borders Vietnam.

Jolie and Pitt started together in the 2005 movie "Mr. and Mrs. Smith."

Jolie's security team had arrived in Ho Chi Minh City earlier Wednesday on her private jet, a source for the star's arrival, adoption officials said.

After the adoption of Jolie's newest child is complete, she is expected to visit the Tam Binh orphanage to play with the children and to help take them, adoption officials said.

Vietnam suspended its adoption programs for several years due to concerns that children were being trafficked and exploited, after the government implemented new regulations to address these concerns, the United States and Vietnam signed a new adoption agreement in 2005. AP

JOLIE —

Memorial service for Diana set

LONDON—A FAMILY MEMORIAL service to mark the 10th anniversary of the death of Diana, princess of Wales is to be held in a London chapel on Aug. 31, British royal officials said Tuesday.

The service will be attended by her sons, Princes William and Harry, as well as Prince Charles, from whom Diana was divorced, and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, his second wife.

It will take place 10 years to the day after the climb in a Paris car crash and will be held in the Guards' Chapel, the regimental place of worship for William and Harry who are both serving in the Household Division of the British Army.

The royals are also known ahead of new ushers to London with positive significance in Diana's life—Saint Paul's Cathedral, where she married Charles, and Westminster Abbey, where her funeral was held.

About 300 people are expected to be invited, including Diana's brother, Earl Charles Spencer—who gave a controversial speech at her funeral—her sisters and friends. AFP

THIS RADAR image released by Nasa Tuesday, March 11, shows what scientists believe to be sea-size bodies of liquid, shown in black, on the surface of Saturn's largest moon Titan. —

Scientists find hydrocarbon seas on Saturn's moon Titan

LOS ANGELES—SCIENTISTS for the first time have discovered what appear to be sea-size bodies of liquid on the surface of Saturn's largest moon, including one about as big as the Caspian Sea on Earth.

The discovery by the International Cassini spacecraft was announced by researchers, who have long described that Titan contained hydrocarbon seas because of methane and other organic compounds in its thick, largely nitrogen atmosphere. Until now, Cassini had only spotted clusters of small lakes on the planetary moon.

"They're very obvious. There's nothing subtle about them," said Cassini scientist Jonathan Lunine of the University of Arizona, Tucson.

Researchers using visual and radar imaging instruments on board of at least two seas on Titan's hazy northpole.

Cassini's camera last month imaged a large, irregular feature measuring 1,004 kilometers long with a surface area similar to the Smallbrook Canyon Sea. Its radar instruments swept over the feature's northern tip and determined it likely contains liquid methane or ethane because of its smooth appearance. However, scientists do not know whether the entire area is filled with liquid, said.

The spacecraft also discerned another body near 500 that measured a surface area of about 170,140 sq km, it is larger than Lake Superior and Ontario combined, scientists said.

While there is no scientific definition of what constitutes a lake or sea on Titan, the newly found features are significantly larger than previously discovered bodies of liquid on the frigid moon and should be considered seas, Lunine said.

Results were presented Tuesday in the annual Lunar and Planetary Science Conference in Texas.

Titan is one of the few objects in the outer solar system that possesses a significant atmosphere, and scientists have long puzzled over its nature. Titan is the only flammable gas on Earth but liquid on Titan because of the moon's intense atmospheric pressure and cold.

Judging by their sizes and depths, Lunine said the newly discovered seas likely are not responsible for replenishing the long-term methane found in the moon's atmosphere. Instead, Lunine said that source likely comes from underground methane reservoirs that vent to the surface.

WORLD BRIEFS

Suicide blasts kill 8 in Iraq

BAGHDAD—A suicide bomber struck a market in northern Iraq on Wednesday, killing at least eight people and wounding 25, police said. The explosion occurred just before noon as the market was crowded with shoppers in Tal Abortmiz, 29 kilometers north of Baghdad. Northern Iraq has been the site of violence that many blame on insurgents fleeing a security crackdown in the capital. The city, which is predominantly Kurdish, has a majority of Turkmens, is 80 km south of oil-rich Kirkuk. In northern Baghdad, a roadside car bomber detonated into an Iraqi army checkpoint in the Sunni neighborhood of Yarmouk, killing two civilians and wounding four others, police said. AP

Kabul explosion kills 6

KABUL—A huge blast in an ammunition dump in the heart of the Afghan capital killed at least six people and wounded 10 on Wednesday, officials said. Several shops were leveled and bystanders were at the outside with their hands to head out survivors. "Two of my neighbors were killed. My shop's house also caught fire and was also damaged," a weeping shopkeeper Zabihullah said at the scene. "I had no idea how the explosion occurred." Interior Ministry spokesperson said: "At least six people were killed and 10 hurt and measures were still working the site looking for more dead or injured." The blast occurred in a shop selling gunpowder and other ammunition for hunting rifles. At least Pakistani, Kabul police crime branch chief said. Reuter

Saddam's sons reburied

TIKRIT—The remains of Saddam Hussein's two sons were reinterred and reburied next to the executed ex-president in a ceremony in their home village of Awjah in northern Iraq on Tuesday, a relative told AFP. Uday and Qusay, killed by US forces in Mosul in July 2003, were earlier buried in a cemetery in the village, just outside the city of Tikrit. "Our today we dug up their remains and reburied them next to Saddam Hussein in the land where he was born," the relative said on condition of anonymity. Saddam was buried on Dec. 30 after his hanging for crimes against humanity. The bodies of the three are buried next to the sprawling palace for condolence meetings under the control regime. AFP

US threatens measures vs Sudan

WASHINGTON—The United States and others will consider imposing punitive measures on Sudan for its refusal to allow accelerated troops into the troubled-ridden Darfur region, the State Department said on Tuesday. US State Department spokesperson Tom Casey told reporters Washington was increasingly frustrated over what he called Sudan's "delaying tactics" over sending a joint force of 3,000 United Nations boys into Darfur. Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir sent a letter to the United Nations this month agreeing in detail against. Officials in Sudan under financial sanctions, however, Casey declined to say what the measures would be but US officials in the past have indicated they could include a range of financial measures against Sudan's government. Reuter

The WORLD

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GLOBAL WARMING

World faces food, water crisis by 2100

OSLO—GLOBAL WARMING COULD cause severe food and water shortages for millions of people by 2100 and trigger a melt of polar ice that could keep ocean levels rising for centuries, a draft UN report shows.

It said the poor were most at risk, for instance in sub-Saharan Africa and around deltas of major rivers in Asia.

The survey by the world's top climate scientists, due for release in Brussels on April 6, said economic damage widely blamed on human activities was already under way with impacts ranging from melting glaciers to earlier than normal plant growth in spring.

"Many natural systems, on all continents and in most oceans, are being affected by regional climate changes, particularly temperature increases," according to a copy seen by Reuters. The draft will have a final review by governments and experts.

"Impacts are very likely to increase due to increased frequencies and intensities of extreme weather impacts," the draft said. It said there were still chances to prevent the most damaging impacts if governments acted.

It pointed to threats such as a melting of Greenland and west Antarctic ice sheets that could cause sea levels to rise, extinctions of species from the Amazon to the Arctic or more severe heat waves in US cities.

"Climate change increases the number of people at risk of hunger marginally," it said, compared to projected declines caused by economic growth. But a large rise in temperatures could put up to 320 million people at risk of hunger.

A melting of glaciers, melting in the Himalayas, could cut summer and autumn flows to Asian rivers more than a billion people live.

Farmers near the equator were likely to suffer falling crop yields even with small temperature rises, while farmers living around the poles might see some immediate benefits.

"Global agricultural production potential is likely to increase with increases in global average temperature up to about 3 Celsius, but above this it very likely to decrease," the draft said.

Hundreds of millions of people would suffer from water scarcity even with a small rise in temperatures. —Reuters

Limits on carbon emissions proposed

LONDON—BRITAIN ON Tuesday became the first country to propose legislation setting binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions as it stepped up its campaign for a new global warming pact to succeed the Kyoto Protocol.

In its draft Climate Change Bill, the government said cuts in domestic emissions had to be cut by at least 60 percent by 2050, set out five-year carbon budgets to reach the target and created an independent monitoring committee to check annual progress.

Prime Minister Tony Blair put climate change at the top of the international agenda when Britain was head of the Group of Eight industrialized nations in 2005, and it could help Britain the first nation to limit emissions by statute.

"This bill is an international landmark," Environment Minister David Miliband told reporters conference. —Reuters

Forests disappearing but at a slower rate—UN report

ROME—AN AREA OF FOREST twice the size of Iberia disappears every day although the rate of global deforestation has started to slow, according to a United Nations report issued on Tuesday.

"Deforestation continues and it continues at an unacceptable rate, however there are signs of potential change," said Wulf Killmann, a forestry expert at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) which published the report.

The destruction of forests not only reduces habitats available for wildlife but also adds to the greenhouse effect because the carbon stored in trees is released into the atmosphere.

Deforestation accounts for 18 percent of the carbon dioxide produced each year, a significant proportion of the emissions scientists say are causing global warming which also poses risks to human via increased floods and the spread of pests.

Demand for agricultural land is one of the main reasons that forests continue to be removed at the rate of 13 million hectares a year, an area almost the size of England.

However, moves by some countries to replant forests has meant the annual net loss has dropped from around 9 million hectares in the 1990s to 7.3 million, according to the "State of the World's Forests 2007" report.

A huge new planting program in China, for example, saw class silver large-scale deforestation in other parts of Asia such as Indonesia, no problem is net increase in the amount of forested land in the Asia-Pacific region during the first five years of the decade.

China's economic boom has driven demand for wood and the country has adopted a tree planting policy not only to reduce its reliance on imported timber, but also to avoid processions, especially in areas near the Gobi desert, Killmann said.

In Africa and Latin America, there are fewer positive signs.

Forested land in Latin America—home to the Amazon—fell to less than half of the continent's area. By 2005, forests were estimated at 47 percent of the total land, from 51 in 1990. Reuters

A CHINESE worker marks the logs at a timber market in Dongying, northeastern China's Shandong province March 13. Western demand for Chinese furniture has fueled an increase of more than tenfold in China's wood imports. —

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WHAT'S INSIDE

- Heat raze Jazz for 7th victory /A29

SPORTS

Editor Tobbick S. Malcedras

PACQUIAO BOUT

GMA deal sealed today

By Ray Leaño

SWITCH TO GMA-7 FOR THE MANNY PACQUIAO-JOBGE Solis showdown on April 14 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

Details of the mega-bank deal and fight coverage will be finalized when top officials of the giant network and Solar Sports meet this afternoon.

Solar Sports cinched the right to air Pacquiao's defense of his WBC International super featherweight title against the unbeaten but unheralded Mexican with an irresistible $600,000 (about P30 million) offer.

In addition, Solar Sports will reportedly get Pacquiao P20 million more for Dunkin coffee and other ancillary rights to the Philippines.

The Pacquiao-Solis bout, which reabbits a pay-per-view card promoted by Bob Arum, will be replayed on ESPN3, where Solar Sports is a major shareholder.

The Solar Sports-GMA-7 partnership envisions a one-joint because Pacquiao's earlier fights were shown over rival station ABS-CBN including an exclusive coverage of the Filipino ring icon's showdown with Mexican Oscar Larios at the formerly Coliseum here pres.

Apparently, ABS-CBN did not bite Pacquiao's proposal for a P40-million rights fee this time as Solar (drawing power remains super despite his impressive 12-win (23 knockouts) two-three slide.

Pacquiao's close ones is reportedly working wonders in the 40s, however, with tickets selling briskly for the bout to be staged at the Alamodome, which will be reconfigured to accommodate 20,000 fans.

Through Pacquiao-Jan Sucro upgrades were scheduling Saturday to add the 5-foot-10 Solis to the growing list of Mexican victims that include such names as Mario Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales, boxing pundits don't rule out an upset.

They suspect Pacquiao won't be at his best here for the fight owing to the congressional campaign he is traversing to his training schedule at the Ahop Gym in Quezon Memorial Circle. Also ruled out was Pacquiao's reported postponement of his trip to the United States, where he is supposed to extend his his training at the Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao has reportedly picked Barrera to prevail over Falcon Mexican Jesus Manuel Silvestre to claim "Monarca of Truth" beat for the WBC super featherweight crown Sunday in Las Vegas.

MANNY Pacquiao (left) trades punches with opponent Jesus Tourangeau

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Harbour Centre gets PBL green light

THE PBL THURSDAY APPROVED THE bid of Harbour Centre to send its team—bedecking by a slew of other league superstars—to represent the country in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Sinduk) Champions Cup which flies off April 9 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad-Saguisag confirmed that the league has agreed to the request of Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero to field the team in the five-day event, which will also serve as the qualifying for the Fiba-Asia club championships in Asia in September.

The Pure Blooders will be backed by some of the league's superstars in the endeavor which marks the first time the country will see action in international basketball competitions after getting reinstated into the Fiba International basket-

TRINIDAD

BAZULI

ROMERO

ball Federation) following a two-year ban.

Tapped to bolster the squad are Marvin Cruz and Patrick Cabahug of Toyota Balintawak, JR Quiñahan of Mail and More, Doug Kramer of Cebuana Lhuillier and Asian 3-Nigerian Import Ekwe of Magnolia.

Training starts tomorrow at the SBP gym in Mandaluyong with Jessel Bacud calling the shots. Team Assistants/Coaches Leon Alcoseba and Ferdinel Bautista/Gilbert Perfecto, who helped the Red Makoi earn their second straight title last month.

Romero's Tong have been named as co-team managers.

Assisting Basketball Association Philippines selection committee members Jaime Cojuangco, Wilson Tieng, Christian Tan and Lito Alvarez backed the PBL decision, which was elevated to SBP president Manny V. Pangilinan for approval.

Pangilinan has yet to give his thumbsup although some members of the committee said it would pose no problem because the country has been sending amateur clubs, powered by at least two reinforcements, to the event.

Expected to make it to the team are Harbour stalwarts JC Intal, Jason Castro, Jojo Duncil, Silver Cup Final MVP Chino Lanete and Final Finesse Player Jonathan Fernandez, who helped the Red Makoi earn their second straight title last month.

James Yap's scoring down this season

JUST LIKE THE PBA, rumors in the collegiate leagues are now starting to worry some experts of all shapes and sizes more aggressive. When the 2007 UAAP season opens this July 1st, expect the returning Season 69 batch to be a lot more

Marife Carlos

IN HUDDLE

Arellano will be parading a 6-foot-6 Eastern European who has established a turn-pro resistance at La Salle Greenhills.

His name is Marko Simicevic and he comes from the former Serbia and Montenegro (Montenegro declared independence on June 3, 2006...ed). Marko, who now considers the Philippines his second home, is a forward who's in his fresh playing season.

On the other hand, scattered throughout which make-or-break Nonoy Black has embarked on a rigorous recruitment program, will next likely land in an American knockey from Beth Academy named Dirk Long.

***

When Long's name was mentioned during a dinner-get-together with some friends, I tried to scroll where I first heard about him.

I realized that he was in the list of rising high school stars that was e-mailed to me by Kamelucci's Benny Alon, who described him as a golden-boy with very blonde locks.

***

"Eith Long looks like he stepped out of the set of a 1960s basketball movie as a Hollywood Stanwyckian remake," Fitzy wrote.

"But don't let his looks deceive you. The kid can flat out play. With his size and skills, On-ramick no bull, he won't need to make too much of a transition as a college guard. His biggest adjustment will have to be in the mental and physical toughness department since he has never played against the the kind of toughness competition that characterizes Philippine College basketball."

***

Although he has been practicing with the Blue Eagles, Eith has yet to formalize his entry by enrolling in the Diliman university.

***

Illy son Raymond, formerly of the UP Maroons, tells me that imports had been in the LIGAP as far back as the '80s. He said he had the chance to play against American Anthony Williams of FEU and Iranian Parviz Fadai of Adamson.

Ian Bella revived the practice by recruiting Nigerian Jaro Ideas.

Speaking of Ian Bella, the SSC Basketeers Club composed of Ian Bella alumni was so inspired and touched by the Red Lions' first NCAA championship after 20 years that decided to commission Jack Nacpil to outline a book which chronicles the event. The book is "geared by looks into the past and glimpses into the future."

The book, which is titled "A Time to Rise," is in full color, which means it is expensive. But proceeds will go to a good cause. That is team, specifically preparations for a back-to-back championship.

***

In those interested in securing a copy, call Jude Bugia (09175951677993) or Oliver Ocampo (09209209868), or you can go straight to the office of the SSC Basketeer Club at Suite 103, Covarrubias Mansion, Pearl Drive cor. Lourdes Street, Bel-Air Center.

***

Curious if his department had anything to do with the sudden resignation of Raymond Saez, PBA head executive Fred Montemayor yesterday dug through his files to reinforce what he had been suspecting.

"Look at this," Fred said, after going through the list of last season's scoring leaders, which Yap once headed MVP.

He was pointing to the number 6 spot where Arellano was when he won the MVP trophy. Scoring leader then was Mark Caguioa, followed by Danny Seigle and Jun-Jun Hontiveros.

"Now look at this, in the first conference of the 2007 season, Jaymee went down to number 8 in scoring, while Mark stayed on top. Perhaps that is one reason why he is not in the 69 team," Fred said.

***

Text message from colleague Ignacio Ong, a BIG Huricane Campmember fan: "Campo is back from Turkey and he's okay. You have to see it to believe it. I did not actually see him walking but the elder brother who visited said. He will be confined at the Makati Medical Center until Sunday."

"Campo seems to go to Bangkok for therapy. He thinks two months should do it. He still wears a neck brace."

The former Fida president survived a near-fatal vehicular accident while attending a Fiba presidential board meeting in Antalya, Turkey, on Feb. 2. He celebrated his 80th birthday in an Antalya hospital where he was confined for weeks.

OVER 400 SEAG BETS

POC opens doors to NSAs

By Jane Navarro

EXPECT A BLOATED DELEGATION OF no less than 400 athletes and officials for Team Philippines in this year's Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

This developed after the Philippine Olympic Committee lowered the door for all the national sports associations to field in their best athletes for the biennial meet which will be held in three cities in Thailand with Nakhon Ratchasima as host.

Aside from the 161 gold and other medalists in the 2005 SEAG the country hosted, the NSAs will be asked to present a list of talented athletes to fill up the rest of the delegation. The medalists in the Doha Asiad Games are also considered as top priorities.

"Of course, the Asian Games medalists are given preferential treatment," said POC deputy secretary general and swimming head Mark Joseph. "The SEAG will come up with others achievers outside of the medalists and justify the selections depending on their performance level."

The criteria of automatically naming the SEAG gold and other medalists in their Thailand jaunt was yesterday brought up by the SEAG Task Force led by vendor's Julian Lamangan, Romeo Kiboho of squash and Joseph to the POC executive board.

"The mission of the task force is that the Philippines should be represented in all events except for hockey and handball, disciplines where we don't have an NSAA," said Joseph.

All the team sports will be included in the delegation, a principle that the POC had not subscribed to in the past Asian Games.

"If we send a lean and mean team, it's like killing the NSAs," said Joseph. "The SEAG is the only level of all sports' events. We want to see that the Philippines will be represented in all levels."

A rough estimate of at least 400 athletes and officials will form the delegation, a number almost similar to the contingent sent to Vietnam in 2003.

In Thailand, a total of 441 gold are at stake in 40 sports and 45 disciplines.

Joseph said the NSAs would be asked to submit the names of their gold and silver medalists in the last SEAG for the POC to determine if these athletes are still fit to compete in Thailand.

"We want to know the status of these athletes. Are they already retired or are they currently training? In the event of these athletes included in the SEAG" said Joseph. "These are the questions begging for answers for us to compete on a high level in the games."

FAIRLYN Zenik has her eyes set on bigger things. BOY SANTOS

Rubilyn proves she's no ordinary girl

By Marc Anthony Reyes

IN MANY WAYS, RUBILYN dente is not your ordinary billiards player.

For one, she's an economics graduate of the University of Santo Tomas, culminacum laude of the Philippine Science High School. She also didn't get into the sport through poor parents' sudden need who took up the sport.

And if she takes happiness in a girl in a man's world.

The 2006 Southeast Asian Games double-gold winner was introduced to the game by her cousin Jun Bon, who would take her to the billiards hall until his friends. To keep his then 13-year-old daughter from getting bored, Jun-Jun would rent her a table of her own for an hour.

And it turned out, those hour-a-day sessions were all that she really needed.

"After the feeding where you get the balls to roll into the pocket," said Jenn, who entered playing against pool hall sparmers before eventually making on the top-ranked battles.

A year after first holding a cue stick, she went her first tournament back in their hometown's Mandaue City.

"It was just a Class C event but it felt very good," said the 20-year-old Jenn.

Good enough to spur her to closer for more glory in the sport.

The results were come faster. She landed a spot in the national team, powering the SP squad to victories in the women's 9-ball and 8-ball gold medals during the 2005 SEAG.

And that was to questions the condition of other titles that has left her trophy case crammed.

It's a test were of the regular billiards player's story, it was the career Bubblegum recently gave up to pursue her education—not this other way around.

She had to quit playing to fix off college.

"It was very difficult [to stop playing] because there were a lot of billiards hall around the school," said Jenn, referring to the cluster of pool halls in Espana and Recto streets. "But I was so tired studying all day I didn't find the time to drop by the pool halls."

When she finished her degree in 2002, Jenn went full steam ahead with the game she loves and further sharpened her skills.

And like the break she usually considers to win her skills.

Winner's twenty seven tournaments in the 2006 SEAG.

"There are many great women players in the world, but I think Filipino women have a place among them," she said.

When that time comes, Rubilyn hopes her presence in the council will be an ordinary scene.

NCAA mancom chair: No ineligibility probe

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE ATHletic Association yesterday tended all allegations that one of its schools has been fielding ineligible players.

NCAA management committee (mancom) chair Ricky Abando said the league is not taking any official step toward the incident which he said stemmed from anonymous text messages sent to the members of the mancom two weeks ago.

"We just yesterday and we brought up the topics of those anonymous text messages," Abando told the Inquirer. "And we found out that the person behind this 'text sunaplo to the group."

He said the person responsible for the controversy must be a disgruntled Philippine Christian University athlete judging from the details of information he has.

ESPINAS

"Until a formal complaint is lodged and evidence is presented to us, we are not taking any official step on this," said Abando.

But that doesn't stop him, according to Abando, from making his own inquiry into the matter. "I am interested in getting into the bottom of this."

Abando added that he has talked to PCU officials and advised them to "check their own ranks."

Reports alleged that PCU used outraged players in different sports disciplines, including basketball.

The reports even went as far as alleging Gabby Espinas didn't make the NCAA qualifications which only allows players who have graduated from high school in three years or less.

Espinas steered the PCU Dolphins to the championship in 2004 when he was awarded the league MVP. The forward signed up with San Miguel Beer in the PBA this year.

No malice intended in POF swimmer switch, says Pasa

By Jane Navarro

IDENTICAL IN EVERY ASPECT, BROTHERS Marc and Matthew Pedernal of La Chance could be mistaken for twins.

So mistaking one for the other is understandable.

The Philippine Amateur Swimming Association (Pasa) yesterday clarified that the player-switching that occurred in the swimming competition of the recent Philippine Olympic Festival in Bacolod City was unintentional and merely an "honest mistake."

Pasa president Mark Joseph said no malice was found when the older Federico Dilan Comprayed in one of the freestyle events of the boys' 6-9 years old bracket instead of his younger sibling Matthew.

"Our technical official is from Manila and does not know the Pedernal boys, who can be identical twins," said Joseph, adding that the last minute entries was a position to deprive any of the brothers the right to participate.

Joseph explained that Marc, losing 10 years old, simply obeyed the technical official when he was told to get ready. Joseph, however, said that the coach of the Pedernal boys could have been more alert and would be admonished for that.

"We consider the incident an honest mistake. Neither swimmer benefited from this mistake nor was any other swimmer adversely affected," said Joseph.

Meanwhile, POF chair Robert Aseniero said that Bacolod Mayor Monico Puentevella had already apologized after criticizing the entrance fee of the athletes in some of the sports of the POF.

"During his Olympic time, he entertained no problems on the financial aspect of running an event while now in the POF have been rather strapped since the beginning," said Aseniero. "It's quite unfair that we get criticized for charging minimum fees that were meant to pay the technical officials who officiated the events."

Peña testing reduced to 'walk'

MELBOURNE—PRACTICE SESSIONS DIDN'T really get to start Wednesday for the Formula Three support races in the opening leg of the Formula One Grand Prix have been moved to Thursday, forcing Dads Pefia to go through the tests and cares of the Albert Park Circuit on board a road car and on foot.

While walking along the track, Pefia, the only Filipino in the 33-man field, took pictures of various turns, trying to get a feel of the 5.300-kilometer track that he will finally get to test early Thursday ahead of Sauber Racing/Goodyear's Indian F1 driver.

Many turns on the street-based circuit are blind corners and drivers need a lot of practice to negotiate them.

"Definitely, it will be tough tomorrow (Thursday), physically," said Pefia, 19.

Qualifying races are set only in the afternoon, with Race 1 on a four-hours lane.

"There are certain portions of the track where you get a chance to overtake," Pefia said.

Pefia is confident he can keep pace with the rest of the drivers coming from Italy, Austria, Britain, New Zealand, China, Finland, Indonesia, Sweden and Australia.

BOBBY Pacquiao

Soto faces B. Pacquiao June 9 in New York

BY BOAZ CZEUS BI THE biggest break in the burning rivalry between Bobby Pacquiao has been in the shadow of his older brother's chiefs when he takes on WBC No. 2 Humberto Soto in a 12-round showdown on June 9 at the Madison Square Garden in New York, USA.

The Soto-Pacquiao showdown will be the third rapport to the league (Miguel Cotto Club Arakali title bout) promoted by Bob Arum's Top Rank.

"I think people are going to see a fighter that people recognize as better than either Barrera or Marquez and he'll be fighting at the Madison Square Garden in June," against Manny's brother Bobby Pacquiao," Arum said Saturday.

According to a source, Arum had given the younger Pacquiao two choices for his next fight: a bout on April 27 or a mega showdown with Soto on June 9, which will get him a bigger purse of $150,000-, the biggest in his career.

Pacquiao, however, said he had opted to see action on June 9 not only for the bigger money, but also to prove that he belongs in the world's elite fighters with a victory over Soto, who is being described by Arum as "tenacious who is better than both Marco Antonio Barrera and Juan Manuel Marquez."

Soto, who hails from Tijuana, Mexico holds a formidable record of 18 wins, 3 losers, 2 draws with 26 KOs, and has been unbeaten since 2002.

Soto earned the right to face the winner of the Barrera-Marquez showdown this Sunday after he beat Ivan Valle in an elimination last year although the WBC later said Arum had handpicked the opponent.

Bobby Pacquiao, meanwhile, has already gone back into training and is currently working on his win. He has not yet fix the United States, but Arum had handpicked the opponent.

Heat raze Jazz for 7th victory

MIAMI—THE SURGING MIAMI HEAT overcame a 17-point deficit in the second half to beat the Utah Jazz, 86-85, on Tuesday and win their seventh straight game.

The defending NBA champions also won for the 13th consecutive time at home with a 26-12 burst in the final quarter to overcome the Jazz's accuracy with just a field goal of Udonis Haslem, who had 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Heat.

Antoine Walker keyed the rally with 11 points, all of them in the final 11 minutes of the game, as the heat snapped Utah's six-game winning streak.

Utah coach Jerry Sloan said his team did not respond well to the fourth quarter.

Utah led 74-60 after three quarters, but the Heat shot 12-for-20 in the final quarter with Walker going 6-for-11.

Jason Williams scored 21 points to lead the Heat, while Haslem added 13.

Carlos Boozer had 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Jazz, who have lost seven straight times to the Heat.

The Jazz, Antonio Jiparo beat the Los Angeles Clippers, 95-84, three 13th straight win.

The Cleveland Cavaliers won their seventh high sixth straight game despite the absence of LeBron James with a 114-105 win over the Sacramento Kings. James missed the game with back spasms.

The New Jersey Nets scored into an eighth place tie with the New York Knicks in the Eastern Conference standings with a 112-108 win over the New Orleans Hornets.

Tyrus Thomas scored a career-high 22 points as the Chicago Bulls beat the Boston Celtics, 99-87.

KEVIN Martin (23) of the Kings hits a reverse layup as the Cavaliers' Sasha Pavlovic looks on. AP

Nadal gains round of 8; Sharapova crashes out

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA (UNWIRE). Nadal overcame into the quarterfinals but it was a breaking day on the backbreaks for the women Tuesday as the top seeds bucked under the California desert heat.

Defending champ Maria Sharapova, three-time Australian Open winner Martina Hingis and 2005 French Open semi-finalist Nadia Petrova all crashed out of the $3.3 million dollar ABN/WTA Pacific Life Open as three of the top four seeds were sent packing.

Number one defending Roland Garros champ Nadal breezed into the quarterfinals by outpowering compatriot Juan Carlos Ferrero 6-1, 6-1.

The hot-headed Spaniard and World No. 1 needed just over one hour to dismantle Ferrero, who is a former world number one.

Sharapova fell to Russian compatriot Vera Zvonareva, two days after three-time men's defending champion Roger Federer went down to his first match to today loser Guillermo Coria.

Petrova pulled out of her match in the second set with French 11th seed Tatiana Golovin because of heat exhaustion.

Greatest loser Ljubicic was one service break away from retiring with a sore injury at his fourth round match before rallying to beat David Nalbandian 2-6, 6-4, 6-2.

But it wasn't all bad news for the women seeds as Russian second seed Svetlana Kuznetsova rolled over Japan's 4th Daijiyama 6-2, 6-2 to reach the quarterfinals.

Nadal managed a loss to Ferrero at the Classic and Masters Series 7-6 (7-2), 7-6 (7-3) last year.

The 20-year-old Zonareva moves into the quarterfinals for the second time in four years and top-seed Sharapova loses her world number one top to Belgium's Justin Henin.

"It was a fun, it is always disappointing," said Sharapova, of the 4-6, 7-5, 6-3 defeat. "I am not making any excuses. There is no one in that. It is one of those days where it didn't happen." Daniela Hantuchova upset third seed Hingis 6-4, 6-3 and moves to the quarterfinals where she will square off against Israel's Shahar Peer. AFP

SPORTSWATCH

Bardon ready for OPBF challenge

CEBU CITY — JULIO BARDON IS THE BIG "MAKE" ON 30 STABLE BILL closed his Japan foray confident that when he goes head-to-head for OPBF lightweight title at 60 kilograms against Hiroki Ioka, Nov. 27 year and Sunday will take on contender Japanese Masahiro Nagahiroka in a 12-round bout for the vacant OPBF 135 lb title at Manila. Till at the International Conference Hall in Nagoya. Japan. Bardon will be accompanied by trainer Juanito Edano and Marine boxing judge Dan Bernardo. Salud, reimagined more committed to the trip as he has been invited to watch the Harry Pamplona Bantam Prince Boy Arce bout this weekend. Salud stressed that he is looking a hard time showing which need to afford, saying that although Petronilo's fight is no longer. Bardon is his boxer and should be given moral support. Alonza said Bardon has prepared long and hard against the undefeated Japanese by sparring against tough boxers at the Wahoo Gold Gym. Magnesia is unbeaten in 11 fights with 7 knockouts. Bardon, which indicates that he could be another contender if he can win against Bardon. Bardon, who holds the Philippine lightweight title, parades a record of 16-10-1 (4 KO's).

Source: Lagundag Contributor

Iligan NCFP cheaufest starts March 30

THE SUCCESSFUL OPEN CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS WILL BE HELD ON MARCH 30-April 3 at St. Michaelis College Gym, Brgy. San Manuel in Iligan City. Again presented at the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP), headed by secretary-general Atty. Prospero A. Pichay, Jr. and Vice-Mayor Elbe, government headed by Mayor Lawrence Cruz. Announcement offers a total cash prize of P200,000 with three championships contested. The Top 12 players and Women and Senior champions will be given. Contact Engr. Lito Sports director in Twelve Star (063) 223-1103, (063) 9065035/Nilo Medina (063) 451-1103, NCFP office (02) 8921 ex e-mail NCFPsecretariat@yahoo.com.

Palawan Open lures Paragua

GRANDMASTER MARK PARAGUA AND INTERNATIONAL MASTER GLENN DI are awaiting have confirmed their participation in the Palawan Open Chess Championship. A project of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) and the Palawan Provincial Government headed by Gov. Joel T. Reyes and Provincial Administrator Atty. Antonio P. Alvarez, Jr. Tournament Coordinator, Mr. Ramon Lim will be held on March 19-25 at the Provincial Capitol Building, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. The champion gets P150,000 plus trophy. Registration is still going on. For inquiries, contact tournament director Roger Dimakuta at (02) 921 5167, Sofia Abaya (063) 451-1103 or the NCFP office (02) 8921 or e-mail NCFPsecretariat@yahoo.com.

LPC Summer Bigtime derby Saturday

TOMORROW'S DOUBLEHEADER SERIES TO SEE THE LAST TWO COLTS BOUND WILL BE also the Summer Bigtime 3-man derby, a one-day spectacle with P1 million at stake. Philippine Cockers Association (PCA) is the sanctioning body of the event, which Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) will host the event and will be supported by Mayor Alfredo Abante and Gov. Ramon Revilla. Entries must be submitted on Friday from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. For inquiries, (02) 7240 and (0918) 918 or (0919) 5162213, Lindon Bello more than 100 fights lined up, the event will start at 1 p.m. Meanwhile, LPCs Talahib Win One Feeds Fundraising has official team today with some 15 fights on tap. The fastest win (maximum 10 minutes) after entry fees fights) will get P150,000. Likewise, the overall fastest win champion will bring home a bonus. A refrigerator cleaned champion, 3rd/2 player and second cleaned champions 2/7 units 1st.

Makati 5- cocker stakes P1 million

MORE THAN P1 MILLION IS GUARANTEED PRIZE MONEY. DOTTED THE CHAMpionship of the upcoming Sunday Mismanagement's rooster derby on March 18 at Makati Coliseum. Hosts Mayor Elmo Alcedo and Sony Escudero supported by members of leading cockers groups like PCAP, PBA, LCBA, SLEC Cockers Club and Bukidnon Cockers Group. Entry fee is P2,500. Official weighing will commence Sunday at 12 Midday to 2 p.m. Derby will be submitted on Sunday from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Meanwhile, Talisay Mayor Alfredo Abante and Gov. Ramon Revilla are also expected to attend the championship of last month's Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 12-cock derby. The next PCAP derby entries on March 18. For details, contact 896-0416 and 896-0415.

City of Baguio, Pasga I bets top Corporate Cup

BAGUIO CITY — THE PHILIPPINE AMATEUR Golf Association (PAGA) 1 zone, through with a final second 1-06 points on Feb. day to pocket the season championship title over MAGA I of Indonesia in the 19th Philippine Corporate Cup.

Together with the opening 101 (MAGA I zone-listed for a two-day total 205 point to beat the Indonesians' 206 in the division which was limited to players who are 55 years old and above.

Wilberto "Jay" Clavecilla Jr. joined PAGA I with a one-under 35 points via the qualified Sta. Cruz golfer Ely Clarito second-dozen, 1,000 yard, par-69 Jack Nicklaus designed course with a four-under 68 for 11 to be also named him the individual title in the same division.

The 30-year-old Clavecilla's teammates also chalked one big games in the three-day Corporate Cup organized by tournament chair Jose Hechanova, Jun Bellosura scored 95 points (24-02) while Andy Co (101-39) and Pablo Sison (101-43) posted identical 106.

AMAGA I veteran players are members of a victorious squad that won the national seniors championship in Indonesia. Team only members of the three-point deficit before the finale, could only muster 102 points and settled for a consolation finish.

Agnes Sembrano carded an even par 36 to score followed by Pacific titan Hanson's 45 and Lakmusan Hechanova's 47 for 141 tally.

City of Baguio posted 300 on rounds of 150 and 150 to rule the Group Division. Goody Ignacio accounted for 108 points (37-36) while Rudy Ledesy contributed 100 (31-32). Other scores for Baguio team Bong Tiu 94 (36-44) and Baguio City Rep. Mauricio Domogan 98 (48-42).

Toyota-Iloilo meets Pagadian Explorers

ILOILO CITY — ACTION SHIFTS to the south when the streaming Toyota-Iloilo Warriors host the Pagadian Explorers at 6 p.m. today in the National basketball Conference at the University of San Agustin gym here.

Pagadian is fresh from a come-from-behind 78-75 squeaker over Quezon Ville Metro in Tagaytay City last Monday.

The Warriors, who took a lesser role during in the previous conference, are eyeing to oust the Explorers of Mayor Sammy Co in the lone match of the tourney.

The backcourt tricks of Edsa Alfaldo, Elbert Lominda and Troy Rosario (combined scoring of last time) campaign together with raved-thin lineman and ex-star Virgene College standout Ruel Bahjan.

"We're confident coming into the game," said Iloilo coach Jerry Codiñera. "We're prepared hard for this and hopefully, our hard work will bear fruit."

The Warriors and the Explorers last met in the first conference last year.

Ground by the Iloilo Basketball League and businessmen Robert Uy, the Warriors debuted with a 3-0 record in the south but were set to become the lowest ranked team to make the semifinals where they lost to the Explorers in three games.

"Iloilo is a dangerous opponent," said Pagadian playing coach Rene Saguin. "It boasts a solid backcourt and a lot of shooters."

Saguin is expected to bank on Melvin Mamaclay, who averaged 18 points and 6.2 rebounds in Pagadian's first two games. Mael Rueda and Mike Cespedes.

Veteran Bobon Asuncion might also suit up for Pagadian after missing two games due to a recurring knee injury.

Meanwhile, the SBC Game of the Week will be aired on Basketball TV at 6:30 p.m. today.

CHAMPS: Adidas King and Queen of the Road Joel de Asis (2nd from right) and Maricel Morales (3rd from right) pose for a trophy after their race last Sunday. They are joined by (from right) Adidas sports marketing manager Randy Cuevas, managing director Joey Singian, Anda Mina and Bendicks.

Bellevue Cup up March 26

THE 3RD ANNUAL BELLEVUE Cup Invitational Tees off on March 26 at the Ayala Greenfield Golf & Leisure Club in Calamba, Laguna.

The tournament teams Bellevue's top accounts and supporters. More than 240 players from 60 corporations are expected to participate in this by-invitation-only tournament which will have some inhouse and avid golfer Johnny Litton as tournament director.

"We are so excited as the players as finally let the games once again and celebrate Bellevue's many successes," said Ryan Chua, Bellevue's director for marketing and communications. "As the Bellevue Cup tradition dictates, we are pulling out all the stops to make this tournament one to remember."

The awards ceremony will be held at The Bellevue Grand Ballroom. A fashion show of select jewelry pieces by top jewelry maker Rendell will also be a highlight of the evening. For inquiries, call Bellevue at 771-6161.

QC GAGEFEST Quezon City Majority Floor Leader Councilor Ariel Inton (center) opens the Inter-Barangay Basketball League at the Bonnard's Park in Timog-Matalin, Quezon Avenue.

Larry's Cup charity golf blasts off today

THE SECOND EDITION OF THE Larry's Cup charity golf tournament comes off the wraps today at the Eva and Pete courses of the Pinoy Pitch Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City.

Above 90 line-men teams or about 335 participants are expected to join, higher than the 250 who saw action in the initial Larry's Cup which was established last year to provide assistance to down beneficiaries through a series of annual tournaments.

"It (Larry's Cup) has opened doors to opportunities by leading a hand to our less fortunate brothers and sisters," said tournament chair Mark Mendoza. "A lot of people from takes notice of this worthy undertaking and have, in fact, requested us to offer more slots so they could do their share as well."

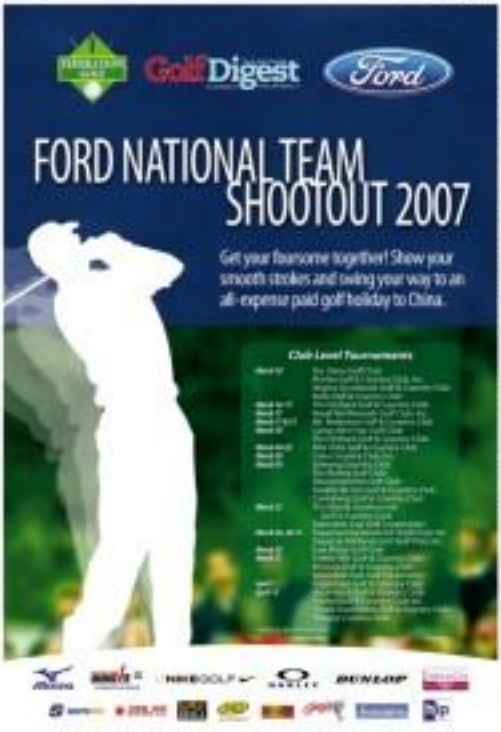
The two-day event, Mendoza said, will have the Esmeralda-Lindblood and Bituinbond foundations list...as beneficiary.

The field will be then divided into five groupings. There will be Class A (0 to 9 handicap), Class B (10-15), Class C (19-26) and Class D (27 and up) for the men's division and another class for the ladies.

Each player will have to submit his/her February handicap index certified by either by SPL, NGF or member club.

The basis for individual scoring will be under the Stableford for-mat where a set bogey is worth 2 points, a net par is two points, a net birdie is three points, a net double-gle is four points and a net hole-in-one is six points.

But the focus will still be in the team competition where a champion plus two runners-up will be determined. Each team will be allowed to field in a maximum of four players per round while the three best scores added up for its total for the day.



Alcano, Orcollo seek 1-2 finish

Bata, Django also join Japan Open

ALCANO

DOUBLE WORLD CHAMPS Rubilen Amit and Philippine money game king Dennis Orcollo aim to sustain their 1-2 finish in the reverse 2007 World 8-Ball Championship as they compete in the 2007 Mizuno Japan Open on March 17-18 in Tokyo, Japan.

They'll be joined against fellow Filipino veterans Lining, the defending champion, Hall of Famer Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Rodolfo Mariano, Edgardo Sanchez and 2006 All-Japan championship winner Lee Van Corteza and other world-caliber cue masters.

Alcano joined World Pool League ruler Ouyang Ning, 11-8, in the finals as rivals Jia Shuzhi, 11-8, in the finals as rivals the Shuzhi ball crowns in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, last Thursday.

After his victory in Fujairah, the 34-year-old Alcano displayed the fine of Wu Chia-ching of Chinese Taipei who became world champion in 8-ball and 9-ball in 2005.

Apart from his $20,000 (P1.3 million) purse, Alcano was amply rewarded with a brand new Kenny runner and an endorsement deal with Star Billiard Corporation on Monday.

Lito Alcano and NPA, the 32-year-old Bicol-born star also a double world champion having ruled the World 9-ball in 1999 and the Stamford World 8-ball crown in 2004.

"I hope to bounce back in the Japan Open," said Arriola, who like Alcano is being managed by Perry Mariano of Bugsy Promotions. "I can win on my side in the finals. My target would at the least was at the 64 but now it allowed to aim to move ahead to 7-2."

"All our confidence that our players will continue their domination in the Japan Open," said Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines president Ramon "Tulay" Tejada. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Shell karting starts March 24

TOUGHER AND MORE EXPLOSIVE action unfolds as the 2007 season of the Shell Helix Superkarting Series kicks off March 24-25 at the Carmona Circuit, Philippines in Bangkal, Cavite.

After the exciting climax of the 2006 season, expect the rivalry between Aaron of the four Marvin Goldcroft and team karting champ Marlon Stockinger to turn more intense this year.

Also expected to shine this season are Daniel Clivat, Mark Bumgarner, Indy Villalon of Red Motorsports, Jean Stefano Marcelo of Marcelo Racing, Mario Aguilar of Bomb Alcohol and Alessandra Madrigal of Alessandra Karting.

They'll be facing other karters moving up in the Formula Open 125 and the Honda Max Session class. Likewise, young upcoming karters led by reigning Junior karter of the Year Dave Rodriguez, Joel Bermejo of Jet Racing, KJ Sulit, Alex Tarrida, Franco Bejos, Joey Dykilla, Pit Japanese Eugene Ghezia and Sena Petersgate are also set to strut their stuff in the junior divisions.

GET THE HP ASSORT ALL-IN-ONE

BUSINESS

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PCGG moves to recover PLDT dividends

Shares close 3.38% lower

₱35B in earnings to go to Treasury

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE GOVERNMENT IS BENT ON RECOVERING SOME P35.1 BILLION in dividends accumulated by the Marcos and Cojuangco groups from shares in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. that have been declared as ill-gotten, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

Ermita said the recovery of the dividends from the PLDT shares was a priority after the government sold the sequestered shares of Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. to Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd. for P25.27billion last July 26.

"We have to recover that because it will go to the Treasury," Ermita told reporters.

Ermita said he discussed the recovery of the PLDT dividends last week with PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio.

"Sabio told me last week that he had assigned somebody to file the necessary action so that they can ask the PLDT to account for those billions because that has to go to our Treasury," Ermita said.

Ermita, however, said Sabio gave no timetable for the recovery of the dividends, but he added he would ask the PCGG chair to

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The latest Buzz in Business : The "BOSS" partners with the "BIZ"

Shares close . . .

From page B1

markets, dealers said.

Weak US retail sales figures added to the negative tone in US stocks as investors feared that pessimism in the housing market would spread to the broader economy by dampening consumer spending, when driven of gloom.

The latest downturn follows the worst performance of markets earlier this month sparked by heavy losses in Chinese stocks and mixed concerns that that correction still has further to go overall.

The composite index lost 137.68 points or 3,474.28, giving up most of its gains it made in the three previous sessions. It traded between 3,063.81 and 3,181.96.

The broader all-share index fell 58 points to 1,595.77.

There were 118 decliners and 14 advancers, with 27 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 3.2 billion shares worth P4.3 billion.

The free zones Industrial Average shed more than 240 points Tuesday to its second-biggest drop in almost four years on news that bonders New Century Financial Corp., downsized home lenders Mobility Co. and General Motors Acceptance Corp.'s embattled unit were facing financial problems on their sub-prime mortgage business.

"Mortgage-related issues are the root cause of the sell-off," said Lehman Brothers chief economist Jerry Webman.

Asian stocks followed in knee-jerk reaction to the slump on Wall Street but most bourses today were not in the same magnitude as the recent sell-off following the sharp correction in China," said Grace Yue of Ingrian Capital Investments Corp.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index dived 263.01 points or nearly 6 per cent on Feb. 28 when the rest of the world took their cue from the sell-downs in China and Wall Street sparked by worries about the US and Chinese economies.

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. fell 95 cents to P2,320.

AFP

Corrupt me if I'm wrong

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bernal III

P70,000 per square metre.

Thus, the scaled-down size strategy of Ayala Land only has something to do with what the biggest chunk of the market is willing to buy.

Meaning, a piece of property priced at P3 millionwas the most.

* * *

OKAY, CORRECT me if I'm wrong, but the report by Hong Kong's PERC (Political and Economic Risk Consultancy) about us as the "most corrupt" in Asia, is most unfair.

As PERC itself said, it is the "perception" among expats here, and they, as far as I know, are mostly never outside the office.

But how does this case administration's Team Unity respond to the report? Well, it said that it is "flawed" perception.

To correct it, the Palace rallied on the fourth pendulum to resolve all pending corruption cases, including the plunder trial of former President Joseph Estrada.

Me, I only think it will take us until the next life to rid this country of corruption.

Still, I take heart in numerous reports about the dismissal of BIR and BOC personnel for unexplained wealth.

These sufferers are where most of the most damaging kind of corruption takes place.

And it's true what the expats say that ours is the most corrupt bureaucracy, who does the corrupting, anyway? Expats are among them, if I'm not mistaken.

* * *

IF HEMAR chair Andrew Tan, founder of the aggressive property company Megaworld, who just consolidated his interests in his fund, liquor-making, and real estate into a holding company, is still on a roll.

Word goes around that he just bought the much-coveted piece of real estate called "Shell House" on EDSA-cum-Ayala Avenue in Makati.

Everybody wanted that piece of land, which is now surrounded by high-end buildings such as the SEDC. Its tech tenant, but which is under utilized as a gas station.

It used to be owned by the Ayala group, which sold it to Tan for his FILDAM Land to payment, which in turn sold it to Andrew Tan.

Now the question is, how different will this upcoming project of Andrew Tan be, say, from the dozens of other buildings rising up in Makati today.

* * *

RUMORS also are going around in that hub of big business (which is, for the sake of Sen. Lito Lapid, Makati) about trouble in local politics that can be bad for business.

Well, all kinds of permits for construction in Makati must pass through city hall—the office of the mayor, in particular.

For one, the current administration's candidate for mayor of Makati is Jagiel, who is said to be still vacationing abroad even at this time.

Also, we just confirmed that a lawyer named Abigail Binay was admitted recently to the Makati Med for "physical trauma." It seems that the young lady received some hard blows in her face and body.

But what caused the trauma, nobody in Makati Med—and certainly none in the police headquarters and the city hall—could say for sure.

She happens to be the daughter of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, who is said to be preparing her son to become the next congressional representative of the second district of Makati.

One source said that Abigail was admitted to the Makati Med at about 1 a.m. last Monday.

The day before, on a Sunday, she was just seen at a Fiesta (non political rally) at Barangay Comembo, apparently campaigning for the congressional seat.

Now, up against Abigail Binay is a certain Jessie Corteza, a student at the JD College of Law who happens to be the son of Pagsanjan chair Elvira Corteza, a staunch supporter of the core administration of Estrada's.

Reports also reached us that, in the evening after the rally, the Binay father and daughter had a spat right in front of people at the city hall.

And all of a sudden, Abigail was in the hospital. Tell you what, not a few in the Makati business crowd are worried.

* * *

ENGLISH, or the return of English as our second language, which is today's international business language, is one top priority of Education Secretary Jesli Lapus.

Best, we just came across an illustrated book on the Greek mythology "The Trojan Horse" (published by Tahanan Books) in both English and Filipino.

See? Well, this one is different. The first half of the book has the English edition, and the last half is the flipped upside-down version in Filipino.

According to Tahanan publisher Soni Fuentes, bilingual books have always had the two languages on the same pages.

Understandably, the reader tends to focus on the more familiar language, which is of course Filipino.

Then, in the Tahanan innovation to the flip-book format, each language stands alone on the page, resulting in less distraction for the reader.

In this way, according to Fuentes, the young ones should learn English or Filipino faster than the usual method.

For the sake of both, Tahanan's phone number is 8 12 7581.

PCGG . . .

From page B1

make a progress report on their recovery efforts.

The government is seeking the recovery of the dividends after the Supreme Court issued a final ruling last August declaring the 111,415 shares of stock of PTIC, held by Prime Holdings Inc., belonged to the government. Those shares were equivalent to 46 percent of PTIC's outstanding capital stock.

PTIC holds a 14-percent stake in PLDT. The 46-percent holding of the government in PTIC is equivalent to a 6.4 stake in PLDT.

Singapore's Pandlan Income Fund submitted the highest bid of P2,130 a share for the PTIC-held PLDT shares at a public auction last December. Its rival, First Pacific had also tried to match the bid because it has a majority stake in PTIC.

First Pacific already owned 34 percent of PTIC and was the biggest shareholder in PLDT with a 26-percent stake. By buying the government's 46 percent stake, First Pacific will fully own PTIC and get an additional 6.4 percent in PLDT.

The government auctioned the PTIC shares to Internaline after the Supreme Court awarded them to the state as part of a long-running legal battle to recover unexplained wealth amassed by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Peso tumbles to 48.75 to $1 after Wall St. slump

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO TUMBLED yesterday to 48.75 from Tuesday's 48.59 to a dollar, one of the worst for among Asian currencies, after an overnight sell-out on US equities in Wall Street sent shockwaves across regional financial markets.

Rate cuts using mortgage loan delinquencies in the world's biggest economy also contributed to aversion among investors, thus raising a clamor to liquidate as well as managing market losses.

In the Philippines, the bloodbath in the US also caused a 2.4-percent decline in the main share index as foreign companies in this and related worlds down on the peso and the government's foreign currency-denominated bonds to fall.

At the Philippine Dealing System, dominated pressures on the peso were tempered by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' unloading of dollars, which capped the day's loss at 48.75-$1, currency traders said.

The peso hit as high as 48.66 before closing at the day's low of 48.75 against the greenback. Volume traded amounted to $245.89 million.

The local currency has lost 4.6 percent to date since the start of the year in 29 sessions, after trading to 46.59-$1 in 2006.

"If not for the BSP's intervention, the peso would have easily slid back to 49-$1," a currency trader at a big local bank said.

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Alliance Tuna sales, income up

By Dazlin L. Lucio

PUBLICLY LISTED ALLIANCE TUNA INTERnational Inc. reported a sharp rise in its 2006 sales levels due to strong demand for its canned tuna products from overseas markets.

In a statement, the company said its net sales last year hit $51.1 million—or 19.6 billion at the prevailing exchange rate—representing a growth of almost 62 percent.

"The strong sales growth was due to the upsurge of orders from all its major markets, including new markets it established last year, and the expansion of its product lines," the company said.

Alliance Tuna's gross profit margin for last year stood at 12 percent, which it said was a good showing for firms operating in a "commoditized global industry."

Gross profits amounted to $3.7 million, or about P189.3 million in 2006.

The firm is a Thai-Filipino joint venture which produces and markets canned tuna. It has one of the largest processing facilities in the country which packages tuna for other brands.

"Improved cost controls and the entry into new markets also paid better prices helped increase its revenues," Co said.

Demand for tuna products rising

improving the core profitability of the company," it added.

More importantly, the firm said that its net income rose by 86 percent in 2006 to $2.6 million, or P128.8 million, compared to $1.4 million in the previous year as a result of the sector-wide control regime.

Net profit margin for 2006 stood at 6.4 percent, which is also better than the previous year's level of 5.4 percent.

"The company's performance in 2006 was the result of our market expansion program and continuous improvements in the factory floor," Alliance Tuna CEO Jonathan Ho said.

"We are now selling to more than 40 countries worldwide, double the number of countries we sold to when we started two years ago," he added.

He added that the firm has been proactive in searching for new markets, which has led to higher sales.

"We have taken part in exhibitions in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Eastern Europe which have helped to expand our marketing reach," he said, adding that the firm's cost control methods have also raised its margins and overall profitability.

Ho said that the latter three-year goal which it set when it started in 2004 was achieved last year "with plenty [of room] to spare."

The Alliance Tuna chief said that the pre-crash from the firm's initial public offering in November of last year "had an immediate impact" on its operations and profitability.

"The full-year impact of those additional funds should be fully presented in 2007," he added.

Recently, the firm said that it plans to borrow up to $3 million from banks to fund its operations.

Alliance Tuna said it would take out a $1 million credit line from the Manila branch of Bangkok Bank. Another $1 million would be sourced from the Philippine Veterans Bank, which would, in turn, be covered by an export guarantee letter the Philippine Export Import Bank.

Eastwood City BPOs post $189M in 'exports'

BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING (BPO) hosted in Megaworld Corp.'s Eastwood City information technology "economy" registered $189.375 million in export earnings for 2006.

According to Megaworld, the data was compiled by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) based on its records of Eastwood City's PEZA-accredited firms.

"Thus, the export earnings figure for all of Eastwood City's businesses—97 of which are information technology (IT) firms and 28 are non-IT—is significantly higher," the company said.

"In the current exchange rate, the country's first IT economic generator approximately $9 billion in export earnings last year," Megaworld's first vice president Antolin Go said in a statement.

"Texas toll centers in human resource operations, from assistance to reconciliations to design, most of our IT business generated an increase in revenues," Co said.

"We also estimated this month of March a new Fortune 500 source, [will] be added.

The official also made a pitch for the firm's 56-hectare McKinley Hill township project in Fort Bonifacio.

"Our first BPO building there, One World Square, is now being finished and will be operational in May," he said. "And we just broke ground on the next tower, Two World Square. This is in response to the tremendous demand for office space in an excellent location such as McKinley Hill."

Go added that the ongoing boom in the BPO industry will mean more dollar earnings for the country with the construction and operation of third-generation BPO buildings.

According to the firm, the BPO buildings at McKinley Hill are "a key and vital component" [of] the project.

"Residents of McKinley Hill's villages and condominiums will experience a livelier quality of life where everything is within walking distance," it said. "They can work or start a business at the BPO buildings and operating commercial center. The condominium and condominium host play amenities to the new low months, McKinley Hill will also host the Chinese and Korean international schools and world-class hotel management institution Enderun Colleges."

"On the national economic level, the BPO aspect of McKinley Hill will further boost export earnings from BPOs," Go said. "On the local level, it will create wealth for executives and business owners, and a better life for the firms' employees. The projected big number of employees will also create a ripple effect on the business prospects of restaurants and shopping centers in McKinley Hill and the nearby areas."

Dazlin L. Lucio

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Circular No. 501
Series of 2007

SUBJECT: AMENDMENTS TO CIRCULAR NOS. 1327 AND 1365 DATED 30 JANUARY 1992 AND 10 APRIL 1992, RESPECTIVELY

Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 220 dated 22 February 2007 approving certain reforms in liberalize foreign exchange rules and regulations, the following provisions of Circular Nos. 1327 and 1365 dated 30 January 1992 and 10 April 1992, respectively, as amended, are hereby further amended, as follows:

Section 1. Item 2 of Circular No. 1327, as amended, shall now read as follows:

"2. Allowable open FX position - Banks' allowable open FX position (either overbought or oversold) shall be the lower of 20 percent (20%) of their unimpaired capital or US$50 million.

For purposes of this section, unimpaired capital of foreign banks that are universal banks shall be defined as permanently assigned capital plus the Net Due To Head Office account. Provided that the amount of Net Due To Head Office that may be added to the permanently assigned capital shall not exceed the equivalent of six (6) times the permanently assigned capital. For foreign banks that are commercial banks, unimpaired capital shall be defined as permanently assigned capital plus the Net Due To Head Office account. Provided that the amount of Net Due To Head Office that may be added to the permanently assigned capital shall not exceed the equivalent of eight (8) times the permanently assigned capital.

Any excess beyond the allowable limit shall be settled on a daily basis.

Penalties on excess overbought and oversold positions of banks under PEZA trading incorporated shall be waived."

Section 2. The following sections of Circular No. 1365, as amended, are hereby further amended, as follows:

1. Section 2 shall now read as follows:

"Section 2. Sales of Foreign Exchange by AABs, NBBEEs and Forex Corporations for Non-Trade Transactions. AABs, Non-Bank Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Supervised Entities (NBBSEEs), and their subsidiary/affiliate foreign currency (FC) deposit unit/offshore banking units may sell foreign exchange to residents to cover payments to foreign beneficiaries for non-trade current account purposes (e.g., educational expenses, medical expenses, travel expenses and salaries of foreign expatriates) without need for prior Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas approval, subject to the following documentary requirements and guidelines:

a. For sales not exceeding US$10,000

- Application to purchase foreign exchange using the prescribed format

b. For sales exceeding US$10,000

- Application to purchase foreign exchange using the prescribed format and supported by documents specified under existing rules

For **sale of foreign exchange, regardless of amount,** for payment of non-trade obligations that are foreign currency loan, or foreign investment-related, the documents prescribed under existing rules shall apply.

NBBSEEs, including Forex Corporations, **shall not sell** foreign exchange in:

a. Non-residents, and

b. Residents for –

1) investment purposes (whether domestic or abroad), including capital repatriation and remittance of profits and dividends thereon;

2) payment of foreign exchange obligations to residents other than AABs;

3) payment of unregistered foreign currency loans/obligations to non-resident financial institutions. However, outstanding unregistered loans/obligations as of 27 October 2000 may continue to be serviced by former counterparties.

4) payment of FCDU loans not eligible to be serviced with foreign exchange purchased from the banking system. However, FCDU loans outstanding as of 27 October 2000 may continue to be serviced by forex corporations.

AABs shall not sell foreign exchange to residents for payment of foreign exchange obligations to residents other than AABs.

2. Section 44 shall now read as follows:

"Section 44. Outward Investments by Philippine Residents.

A resident may invest provided that:

1. the investments are funded by withdrawals from FCDUs; or

2. the funds to be invested are not among those required to be sold to AABs for pesos; or

3. the funds to be invested are sourced from AABs but in amounts not exceeding US$10 million per investor per year.

An application to purchase foreign exchange for outward investments, whether or not prior Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas approval is required, shall be accompanied by the documents specified under existing rules.

For purposes of this section, investments in foreign currency-denominated investments of this Republic of the Philippines (ROP) or other Philippine entities are considered outward investments.

Outward investments by residents (excluding BSP-supervised entities) funded with foreign exchange purchases from AABs in amounts exceeding US$10 million per investor per year shall require prior approval and registration by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Existing rules on outward investments of BSP-supervised entities shall continue to apply.

Foreign exchange acquired or received by residents as dividends/earnings on investments proceeds from outward investments funded by foreign exchange purchased from AABs shall be inward-remitted within five (5) days from date of receipt and sold for pesos thru AABs within three (3) banking days from receipt in the Philippines."

Section 3. Repealing Clause. All provisions of existing BSP issuances that are inconsistent herewith are deemed modified accordingly.

Notwithstanding the liberalization of foreign exchange rules and regulations, banks are reminded to adopt and adhere to sound policies in undertaking their foreign exchange transactions.

This Circular shall take effect on 2 April 2007.

For the Monetary Board

(Sgd.) **AMANDO M. TETANGCO, JR.**
Governor

8 March 2007

Philex sold P723M in gold, copper

PUBLICLY LISTED Philex Mining Corp.'s sold P723 million worth of gold and copper in a single shipment last month as it continued to take advantage of strong precious metals prices on the world markets.

In a statement to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Philex Chair and CEO Walter W. Brown said the mineral came from the shipment of 1,023 dry metric tons of copper concentrates to L.D. Metals.

The terms of the latest shipment comes after it announced a sharp improvement in its earnings for 2006 due mainly to the high metal prices.

Philex Mining has said in net profit for last year hit P3.086 billion, up from just P902.1 billion in 2005.

The year-on-year performance represents a 464 percent increase in the company's bottom line.

On top of the high prices of gold, silver and copper, Philex was also helped by increased output.

In its statement to the exchange, Philex said that its total gold revenues also appreciated a sixth (hiked of P9.16 per share, the sound and payment shares of which has yet to be announced.

Earlier, the company also said its board had also approved the extension of its Padcal mining operations from 2011 to 2014. Padcal, located

Grand Boulevard, Waterfront feud heats up

Hotel bars Gatchalian, associates from entering premises

By Desirré L. Lucas

THE WORLD'S TALLEST OWNED Grand Boulevard Hotel has accused Chinese tycoon Lucio Tan, mentor William Gatchalian of spreading rumors about an impending buyout which, it claims, has adversely affected business.

In a letter to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Grand Boulevard corporate secretary and legal counsel Teresa Mondoñedo said the company's business "is being bothered by persistent rumors that Grand Boulevard had been bought by Waterfront Properties Inc."

Waterfront is a PSE-listed firm controlled and owned by Gatchalian. Grand Boulevard Inc., on the other hand, is owned by publicly listed Boulevard Group of the Pendillo family.

"Gatchalian and his gaming associate Hilo Wong were barred on remaining that there is no truth to existing staff for Grand Boulevard Hotel," Mondoñedo said in his letter to PSE president Francis Lim. "Our officers and employees became worried about their jobs especially after calls to them from Mr. Wong and Mr. Gatchalian's officers."

"The rumors are false and we believe they come from Pedro Group, Waterfront Properties, William Gatchalian and his cohorts," the letter said. "They may be disseminating this information as part of their supposed deliberate 'buying spree' of hotels and resorts in an attempt to improve their stock at the PSE."

"We do not wish to be involved in any stock price manipulation or material misplaced or related activities that end up fooling the public industry or the investing public," Mondoñedo told the PSE.

The hotel's official said they initially tried to brush off these threats and rumors, which were circulating through the travel and trade industries, as well as queries from members of the media.

"They persist still and are now affecting our business," he said.

Aside from the reported damage caused by the rumors, the hotel said Gatchalian and Wong have been banned from entering its premises.

Recently, Waterfront spent an estimated P500 million to improve a newly leased boutique hotel in Manila and announced plans to open two similar hotels in other cities, aiming for the high-end market.

Last year, Waterfront signed a contract to lease and manage the 10-room, 800-sq.m. G Hotel Manila, owned and designed by architect Gerry Contreras. The hotel is only a stone's throw from Grand Boulevard Hotel.

Waterfront may open five more G hotels in the cities of Cebu, Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Iloilo and Bacolod.

Waterfront said a 10-room G Hotel Cebu City Hotel and Casino, Waterfront Airport Hotel and Casino Mactan and Waterfront Insular Hotel Davao. It has a total of 1,500 rooms, 1,500 employees and over 41,000 square meters of convention and gaming space. It also houses the country's biggest gaming facilities.

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First Gen seen bidding for more Napocor gencos

By Abigail L. Ho

FIRST GEN CORP. PLANS TO BID for more Napocor generating assets as it considers the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. will be placing on the auction block, including one in the Visayas and another plant in Metro Manila.

First Gen vice chair and chief executive Oscar Garrucho Jr. said the company saw the Napocor privatization as a "new and only asset" up for grabs that they had to grab.

"Once these [assets] are sold, it will take a long time for something like this to happen again. So we have to look at the assets that are particularly interesting for us," he said.

He said First Gen had always been keen on bidding for Napocor's hydro and geothermal power plants, plus a select number of coal-fired power plants.

In fact, the power firm had already lapped three of the assets that PSALM has put up: the 1.4-MW Agusan hydropower plant and the 132-MW Pantabangan-Masiway hydropower plant package.

Garrucho said First Gen would like to participate in the bidding for the Ambuklao-Binga package and the Angat facility.

Also of interest were the Pulangbato and Tiwi-Makban geothermal facilities, he said.

"And because we have expiring concession, gas not just for power but for other uses, we also want to look at Batangas. And I think the government has to make up its mind on what it wants to do with Sucat," he said.

PSALM vice president for asset transparency and electricity trading Perlaw Tampinco had earlier said that the government agency has yet to decide on whether or not to place the decommissioned 624-MW Sucat thermal power plant on the auction block.

This was because the plant could serve as a "fallback" in case no new capacity is put up in the Luzon grid prior to the projected 2015 to 16 lean period.

He said the retired power plant could be repowered if ever there would be a supply shortage in the near-to-long term.

"We're still making it a fallback in case of supply tightness and if there's no additional supply coming in. There should be a decision on what to do as with Sucat soon, in the year," he said.

First Gen also recently invested in interests in the 600-MW Mainit coal-fired power plant after Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. decided to sell its 40-percent stake in the project.

First Gen senior vice president Ricardo Tuason explained the company's change of heart, saying conditions then were different from conditions now.

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Asian stocks plunge after Wall Street sell-off

A TRADER reacts as the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in Hong Kong yesterday. The Hang Seng Index down 3.7 percent at 18820.22 mid-day amid regional weakness after Wall Street fell. Other markets in Asia also fell in reaction to the Wall Street drop.

US market drop 2nd biggest in 4 years

TOKYO... ASIAN STOCKS PLUNGED Wednesday after Wall Street chalked its second biggest drop in four years and rattled already nervous markets over lending.

The tumble extended a couple weeks of international trading turmoil rooted in concerns about overheated global markets and slower growth in the American economy, a major export market for Asian companies.

Concerns about US sub-prime lenders and lackluster retail sales pushed the Dow Jones industrials down 1.47 percent overnight, sparking sell-offs across Asia.

Stocks in Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, China and Malaysia were all down more than 2 percent, while India and Philippine stocks tumbled more than 3 percent.

At the Tokyo Stock Exchange, the region's biggest bourse, the benchmark Nikkei 225 index sank 366 points, or 2.09 percent, to 16,673 points. Foreign investors who bought up stocks during the recent rally led the selling, traders said.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index fell 2.6 percent. Indian stocks spurted 2.2 percent lower, while Philippine stocks plunged 3.4 percent.

Overnight, the Dow fell 292.86, or 1.97 percent, to 12,875.06 amid concerns about US sub-prime lenders, who provide mortgages to people with poor credit.

The US Commerce Department also said sales at retailers rose a less-than-expected 0.1 percent in February, suggesting consumer spending might be waning.

While Asian markets are considered to signals of a downturn in the US economy, analysts said the economic fundamentals of the Asian regions remain strong.

The recent declines in stock prices were more likely a correction in cool markets that had risen too far too too many months.

"The sell-off is in sympathy with the cheap sell-off we saw overnight on Wall Street, and is highlighted by the continued nervousness on there," said David Cohen, chief of Asian economic forecasting at Action Economics in Singapore.

While the US retail sales data and mortgage woes have prompted the sell-off on Wall Street "give a little more room for optimism," Fundamentals such as strong US jobs data released Friday were still supportive of global equities.

"The world economy seems to be remaining on a upward trajectory," Cohen said.

The slump worsened as troubled investors in global markets from every bigger losses that started late last month with a sharp sell-off in Chinese stocks Feb. 27, which scoreboarded to a 416 point drop in the Dow later that day.

The Shanghai Composite index was down 1.85 percent Wednesday.

In India, jittery investors sold their holdings in almost every blue-chip stock, dragging the 30-share Sensex, the benchmark stock index of the Bombay Stock Exchange —down by 400 points, or 3.2 percent, to 12,500 in the first 30 minutes of trading. AP

Oil prices hover around $58/barrel as traders await US fuel stocks data

SINGAPORE—OIL PRICES EDGED higher in Asian trading Wednesday ahead of US government oil inventories data expected to show declines in some fuel stocks.

"The crude oil futures market has rebounded almost $10 as traders focus on the expectation that this week's US inventory report will show declines in products, inventories, both gasoline and distillates," said Victor Shum of Purvin & Gertz in Singapore.

Light, sweet crude for April delivery gained 3 cents to $57.96 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange mid-morning in Singapore.

The contract dipped by almost a dollar on Tuesday to settle at $57.93 a barrel following a decline in Wall Street which stirred worries about the US economy and demand for energy.

The oil futures market is experiencing a short-term recovery said Sim Moh Siong, chief commodities strategist with Hitachi Futures Overseas Tokyo International participants are taking the sidelines ahead of the US fuel stocks data, he said.

Market analysts expect gasoline inventories to fall by 2.1 million barrels when the US Energy Information Administration reports data for the week ended March 9 later Wednesday, according to a Dow Jones Newswires poll. Crude oil inventories are expected to rise by 1.4 million barrels, while distillate stocks are expected to fall by 1.9 million barrels due to last week's cold weather.

A monthly report released Tuesday by the International Energy Agency has also focused prices, Shum said. The report warned that oil stocks in industrialized countries were falling at an unusually high rate so far this year and could be the biggest first-quarter decline in crude oil inventories in 16 years.

Shum said the IEA report helped support prices against the impact of falling Asian stock markets Wednesday.

Japanese stocks fell nearly 3 percent during Wednesday trading, falling in the wake of an overnight plunge on Wall Street.

A meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries on Saturday appeared to have minimal savvy on prices because of expectations that oil ministers would opt to keep output steady.

In other Nymex trading, heating oil futures rose 1.36 cents to $1.7000 while natural gas prices added 9 cents to $6.981 per 1,000 cubic feet. AP

Viacom sues Google's YouTube for alleged copyright violation

NEW YORK—BIG MEDIA FOR ITS FIRST big outing at YouTube Tuesday as Viacom Inc., the owner of MTV, VH1, Comedy Central and other cable networks filed a $1 billion (760 million euros) copyright lawsuit against the video-sharing site and corporate owner Google Inc.

The lawsuit marks a sharp escalation of long-simmering tensions between Viacom and YouTube and represents the biggest confrontation to date between a major media company and the hugely popular site, which Google bought in November for $1.76 billion (1.33 billion euros).

Last month, Viacom demanded that YouTube remove more than 100,000 unauthorized clips from its site, and since that time the company has uncovered more than 160,000 unauthorized clips, Viacom spokesman Jeremy Zweig said.

A quick search of YouTube's site Tuesday turned up numerous clips from Viacom programs including segments from Comedy Central's "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" and Nickelodeon's "SpongeBob SquarePants" series.

In the lawsuit, filed in US District Court in New York, Viacom says YouTube "intentionally encourages and induces" copyright infringement "on a huge scale" and has "beaten, disregard" of intellectual property laws.

YouTube's soaring popularity has been a cause of fascination but also fear among the owners of traditional media outlets, who worry that YouTube's displaying of user-uploaded clips from their programs—without compensation—will lure away viewers and ad dollars from cable and broadcast TV.

Viacom is especially at risk because many of its shows are aimed at younger audiences who also are heavy Internet users. At the same time, Viacom is trying to find other, legal ways to distribute its shows digitally, such as by selling episodes of "The Daily Show" and "South Park" for $1.99 (1.51 euros) each through Apple Inc.'s iTunes service. Those shows can then be viewed on a computer or video iPod.

YouTube says it cooperates with rightful copyright holders and removes programming as soon as it is notified. But Viacom argues that approach lets YouTube avoid taking the initiative in curtail copyright infringement, instead shifting the burden and costs of monitoring the site onto copyright holders.

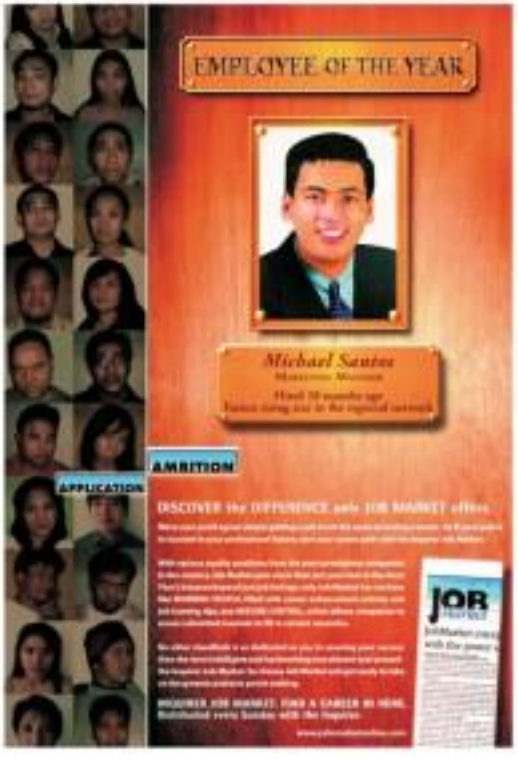
Alexander Macgillivray, associate general counsel for products and intellectual property at Google, said YouTube was protected under the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which gives online service providers protection from copyright law suits so long as they comply with requests to remove unauthorized material.

"We're saying that the DMCA protects what we're doing," Macgillivray said in an interview. On the other hand, he said, "The DMCA is clear that we either must have (such) a notice" or "get a notice" to remove material.

Other media companies have also clashed with YouTube, but some, including CBS Corp., have agreed to provide some clips to the site. CBS Corp. stand to be part of Paramount has since split off into a separate company.

Universal Music Group, a unit of France's Vivendi SA, had threatened to sue YouTube, saying it was a hub for pirated music videos, but later reached a licensing deal with them.

Despite these antagonisms, media's relations with YouTube remain tony. CBS' CEO Leslie Moonves told investors last week that its pact with YouTube had provided a big promotional boost for its shows. AP



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Inquirer

Firm turns to coalbed methane to fuel power plant

Natural gas may be tapped from existing mines

IT'S THE GUITAR MAN
A man selling small guitars persuades a couple to part with their precious purse along Roxas Boulevard. Hawkers appear to be doing brisk business along the busy streets of Metro Manila, selling anything from fishing rods and mobile phone chargers to toys. RAYMUND ELIA

By Abigail L. Ho

LOCAL THIRD MG MINING AND ENERGY Corp., through affiliate Indian Energy Philippines Corp., hopes to tap coalbed methane in its coal mines in Mindanao to fuel a 100-megawatt (MW) power plant.

In a recent interview, Subas Energy president and MG Mining vice chair Indira Bemanang said he was confident that "100 billion cubic feet of coalbed methane, which could be derived from various coal mines all over the country, may be found in the existing coal operating contracts (COCs) of MG Mining.

"I believe the largest potential for coalbed methane is within our COCs," Bemanang told reporters. "I think the reserves are about 100 billion cubic feet, enough to power a 100-MW power plant for 20 years."

Asked to give an estimate on how much the company would have to invest to extract the coalbed methane and use it to fuel a generation plant, he said further studies and comparisons would still have to be made.

For the power plant alone, however, using the industry benchmark of $1 million for every megawatt of power, he said that would need an investment of at least $100 million.

"We'll be transforming methane from a liability into an asset," he said.

The United States and Philippine governments have signed an agreement that would allow the country to make $10 out of $6.4 billion clean money of coalbed methane potential.

Under the memorandum of understanding between the Department of Energy and the US Geological Survey of the United States Department of Interior, the two countries would assess the potential coalbed methane and related coal resources in the Philippines.

Coalbed methane refers to the natural gas found in coalbeds. It has a variety of uses, one of which is power generation.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the study would allow consumers to turn something lethal to coal miners into something useful.

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
Makati City, Metro Manila

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS
March 20, 2007

To The Stockholders:

Pursuant to Article IV of the Amended By-Laws of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of BPI will be held at the Crystal Ballroom, Hotel InterContinental, Makati City, Metro Manila, on March 29, 2007, Thursday at 9:30 A.M. for the transaction of the following business:

1. Calling of Meeting to Order
2. Certification of Notice
3. Determination and Declaration of Quorum
4. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders on April 6, 2006
5. Reading of Annual Report and approval of the Bank's Statement of Condition as of December 31, 2006 incorporated in the Annual Report
6. Approval and Confirmation of all acts during the past year of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and all other Board and Management Committees and Officers of BPI
7. Election of 13 Members of the Board of Directors
8. Election of External Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration
9. Unfinished Business
10. Other Matters

In accordance with Article III of the said By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Book of BPI will be closed from February 27, 2007 to March 29, 2007. Only Stockholders of record as of February 27, 2007 will be entitled to notice and to vote at this said meeting.

It is not an requirement for you to attend this meeting, you may at your option, appoint another person to represent your interest by means of a proxy, which should be submitted to the Office of the Corporate Secretary at BPI, 14th Floor, BPI Building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, Metro Manila, not later than 9:00 P.M. of March 15, 2007. Validation of proxies shall be held at the same office on March 22, 2007 at 9:00 P.M.

When signing as attorney-in-fact, executor, administrator, guardian, or in any other representative capacity, please give full title and the papers showing your authority.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Sgd.) CARLOS B. AQUINO
Vice-President &
Corporate Secretary

Healthcare protection in RP not sufficient

By Doris C. Dumlao
(Continued)

"[H]OWEVER, WE ALSO KNOW that many of the poor, even with a PhilHealth card, do not even seek care because of the cost of travel, and expectations they may have to make substantial co-payments," the report noted.

The IMF working group noted the need for government commitment and action to address the following issues: enrollment for universal coverage, shifting the financial risk from members to PhilHealth, and service providers as well as safeguarding and improving the quality of care need to be addressed simultaneously.

"This requires commitment and actions from [local government units], PhilHealth as well as DOH," the paper said.

The working group also cited the need to contain the costs of drugs and health service provision.

High costs

"Increased insurance coverage and enhanced insurance benefits must translate into the desired level of protection for members if they are captured by high costs. Similarly, private health expenditures will not yield their risk-protective if patients are too high," the paper said.

Two reasons were cited for such high costs in the Philippines:

• Current health financing mechanisms based on fee-for-service reimbursements encourage prior continuous of health service provision in particular, the way benefits are currently designed under PhilHealth allows hospitals to simply increase their prices when benefits are raised.

Hence, there's lack of a mechanism to control the use of services including professional fees notwithstanding attempts to benefits ineffective in decreasing out of pocket expenses, and,

• Drug prices in the Philippines are among the highest in the region, sometimes 3-4 times higher than the international price benchmarks.

Control prices of drugs

"The issue is particularly critical in the many cases where drugs are lacking at public hospitals, because the poor are forced to purchase drugs from private pharmacies at higher cost and without the possibility of reimbursement," the paper said.

As such, the paper urged effective mechanisms to control and reduce the prices of drugs and service provision.

Rising incidence of HIV

Recommended measures are: a change of provider payment modalities of PhilHealth for health services (away from fee-for-service), increased use of quality generic drugs, continuous price and quality monitoring (Drug Price Reference Index, quality control), taking up opportunities for pooled procurement (hospital pharmacies and LGUs), promoting rational prescribing and price regulation of prescribed drugs.

The task force also called the IMF's attention to the rising incidence of HIV infection in the Philippines.

Compared to the average of 14 HIV cases per month in the last five years (2001-2005), the HIV Registry had shown a monthly average of 27 new cases in 2006. As early as May 2006 the total HIV cases have already exceeded that of 2005.

The majority of HIV cases in Philippine exhibit during their peak years of economic productivity (15 percent were aged 20-29 years old).

All modes of transmission have already been reported, but sexual transmission means remain to be the most common (87 percent).

"Because AIDS is a behavior-driven disease and behavior take time to change, and because the incubation period of HIV infection could take as long as 10 to 15 years, the impact of all antiretroviral-prevention taken today will be felt after a decade or so. The message therefore is clear: act now or pay more," the report said.

Bird flu

The task force also sought the establishment of appropriate compensation and surveillance systems against the threat of infection in bird flu.

"The Philippines is still free from avian influenza that affects more 50 countries in the world today," the report said.

"However, the threat is still very high considering the globalization of trade and industry, transportation and continuous contacts.

"At the Philippines has one of the highest proportions of its GDP (gross domestic product) attributed to the poultry industry, any outbreak of avian influenza would have dramatic economic repercussions."

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BUSINESS

IT zone set to rise on former IS property

SAILING AWAY The Philippine shipping industry marked another milestone with the completion of the country's first pure car and truck carrier, the biggest ship ever produced in the country. The ship built in Bataan, Cebu by Transfield Wasay Industries Inc. of the Alkonix group is 12 stories tall and can carry 5,000 cars.

Property firm now seeking accreditation from Peza

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE FIRST INFORMATION TECHnology park in Makati is set to rise on the former site of the International School of Manila, land developer Century Properties Inc. announced on Wednesday.

The realty company, which won the bidding for the property in June 2006, said that construction work on the five-hectare Information Technology park will start in the second quarter of the year.

The IT park will be developed with the help of architecture and urban planning firm Javier Fuentebella.

It will have both residential and commercial buildings, an IT school, and a high-end hotel.

A minimum of 100,000 square meters will be allocated for "Grade A office space."

"The office market has changed dramatically in recent months, with lease rates hovering in the P1,000 per square range, and strong demand continues to fuel the growth of the real estate industry," Century Properties managing director Hiroo Ikehata told in a statement. "It makes sense for developers to start building office space."

The IT park will cater to the business process outsourcing sector, particularly the high-end BPOs who are willing to pay premium rates for a good location.

"We are currently applying for Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) accreditation and will most likely exceed the minimum requirement of one hectare for the IT park," Ikehata said. "We feel that we can extend some of our products by 2009 to the first batch of office buildings."

Ikehata also revealed Century Properties' plan to donate land to put up an IT school in the area.

"We believe that there will be a huge complementary relationship between the school and the availability of qualified manpower to eventually work in our buildings," he said.

BSP expects bad loan ratio to fall below 5%

By Doris C. Dumlao

ESPENILLA

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas expects the commercial banking system's bad loan ratio to fall below the 5-percent mark this year, a notable closer to the average level of 2-4 percent before the Asian currency crisis erupted in 1997.

The banking system's stock of bad loans peaked at a ratio of total loans of 18.41 percent in December 2001, as many corporate borrowers defaulted on their debts, while banks turned cautious in providing new loans after the Asian turmoil resulted in sharp currency devaluations and interest rate hikes.

Bester Espenilla Jr., BSP deputy governor for bank supervision, told reporters that banks would likely be unable to unload trusted loans to halt in the coming months as the protracted Superferry-14 and Metrobank Lease scandals expire in April next year.

"If you follow the experience of EPCIB (then SPCIbank), (the banks) moved aggressively in the last six months, so if that last major hanging issue, it will really lay bare [10 percent]," Espenilla said.

Under the SPV Law, some of the cases are centered while two that are usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets are expected to encourage banks to clean up the bad assets that have piled up since the Asian crisis. The law also scrapped the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and e-VAT (expanded value-added tax), while it reduced registration and transfer fees by 50 percent.

Based on the BSP's latest report, the nonperforming loans of Philippine commercial banks at the end of December fell to a new post-Asian crisis low of 6.36 percent on a nationwide basis, from 6.74 percent at end-November.

The BSP in the next few days will release the NPL update for January.

"Part of the (January) report is an adjustment of the December figure," Espenilla said. "(The result will probably be lower than 6.36) percent because there were late reports from some banks. The 6-percent (mark) had likely been breached."

The bulk unloading of unsecured loans through the SPV framework has emerged as the most effective way of cleaning up banks' books as against restructuring, or giving easier terms to borrowers such as stretching out the maturity or reducing interest payments.

Based on end-2006 figures, all 21 percent of banks' total restructured loans mostly 166.3 billion in real estate loans.

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KITCHEN RESCUE
Reggie Aquino

Good ol' fish and chips

FAMOUS English fare fish and chips are usually known elsewhere as fried factory cod fish and French fries.

Even hardcore carnivores will like this quintessential Brit meal

RELIGION HAS TAUGHT US to go meatless on Ash Wednesday, all the Fridays of Lent, Maundy Thursday and Black Saturday as a form of penance and self-denial.

But recent medical studies have shown that the consumption of fish is, in fact, beneficial to one who is in a state of prayer and meditation. For only a sound and healthy mind is best equipped for such mental activity. Fish contains omega-3 fatty acids also known as brain food.

And the brain is made up mostly of good fatty acids with the majority of it being omega-3, of which our body produces very little. Hence a diet rich in omega-3 is said to increase the mind's capacity for learning, heighten its problem-solving skills, helps it focus and aids in memory retention. It also promotes positive mood and emotional balance, both of which are vital to our well-being.

The proverbial question at hand is encouraging people to eat more fish. It is quite difficult for many to opt for fish over lechon! But even the hardcore carnivore will agree that the quintessential Brit meal of good old fish and chips might just do the trick!

The origin of fish and chips eaten together is a cause of debate. Some say that it is savoured from French and Jewish culinary traditions when the *frites*...French fries...were served with Jewish fish fritters. Others say that it was a Sephardi dish...*pescado frito*...deep-fried fish brought by the Spanish and Portuguese Jews to England in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the English author of the Charles Dickens made mention of it as "Oliver Twist," with reference to a "fried fish warehouse." Perhaps it is because the main concern in the mid-19th century was to eat in outside oneself, and fish and chips served the purpose for it is a complete, nutritious and affordable healthy meal!

According to the National Federation of Fish Fryers, in the UK alone, 9,000 fried fish vendors sell 300 million fish-and-chip meals a year.

The Perfect Chips

2 kg potatoes, peeled and chipped

- Heat oil. Use canola/seed oil (please!) to 350°F, preferably in a deep fat fryer or any cooking vessel large and thick enough to hold enough oil for deep frying. Avoid aluminum pans.

Tips for perfect chips:

- Cut fries and soak in cold water for at least 10 minutes to give added crispiness and to avoid sticking together as they cook. A bit of vinegar in the water solution will avoid discoloration.
- Leave skin on potatoes for flavor and nutrition.
- Use a salad spinner to dry chips before frying or to reduce fat absorption.
- If you have time, try blanching your potatoes in oil. This step makes crispier fries. The way to do this is to heat the oil to 350°F and cooking the potatoes without browning them so the potatoes cook slowly. Drain fries on paper towels and cool to room temperature. Refrigerate fries on a rack and refrigerate. Before serving, heat oil to 360°F and refry the potatoes.
- Potato variety plays a major role. Russets make the best. Butter or not, follow these tips and your chips will be better than ever!

Don't know if the following is perfect but this is a recipe that has served me well.

The Perfect Batter

1 kahite fish fillets
Extra flour for dredging
Batter:
2 1/2 cups pastry flour
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
1½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
2 x beer
3 eggs
Salt and pepper

- After frying chips, increase oil temperature to 375°F.
- Wipe fillets dry.
- Put flour on plate and dredge fish. This stops the fish batter from coming off.
- Mix all the batter ingredients in a large bowl and whisk until smooth.
- Take fish one at a time holding it by the tail. Swirl around batter until evenly coated.
- Plunge into hot oil.
- Fry until golden, drain on paper towels and serve immediately.

Garlic Mayo
1 small vinegar
1 jalapeño
2 tbsp garlic

DINING OUT

Specials for meatless Lenten season

ACQUARIO BISTRO OPENING THIS MARCH seafood fusion set menus for Lenten season for as low as P750+. They include Fiesta Shanghai Shake Shake served with Asian risotto cakes; Fillet of Sole in Lemon Cream Sauce served with Crispy Potato Pockets and Egg Rolls; Pancake, and Fish d'Jour. All are with fresh salad of the day. In Lemon Caper Sauce. Also available are Steamed Tilapia Pancake in Oyster Cream and Relish Pesto Sauce. Steamed Pompfret in Soy Ginger and Spaghettini al Pesto with Grilled Shrimp and Prawns. Call 8167171 local 8446 or 8727, 8838449 and 8865238.

INTERCONTINENTAL MANILA presents Chilean Sea Bass Festival at the Fl may 46 - bar Robinsons and an Argentinian Chorizo at Café Jimenez until March 28. Call 8180711.

BURNT ROTEL'S Bangkok Royal Thai Restaurant presents "Flavors to Bangkok," March 15-31, featuring a 4-course dinner for P60. Gaeng Khiw Wan (green curry (if) terrine with sweetbreads), Poo Talay Phad Phrik Thai (Thai spicy fried crab with curry leaves), Nuea Sub Phad Makhan Yao (stir fried minced beef with eggplant), Pla Neua Sawoey (deep-fried mackerel topped with green mango sauce), and Pow Ong Lap Fai (stir-fried spinach with pigeonnet apple sauce). Call 8823333.

CENTURY PARK HOTEL'S Café in the Park offers Chef's Special 12-course featuring Roasted Tenderloin Fried with Basil and Lemon-Myrtle served with Purple Flour and Vegetable Macaroni; Fish and Shellfish "Specials" on Buffet Menu served with Pumpkin Puree and Watercress Sauce. Classical-inspired All-Fish Eve was baked with Cottage Cheese, and 45-Angus Tenderloin of Beef in Caviar Bag with Wild Mushrooms served with Garden Vegetables and Sage Sauce. Call 5288888.

CITADINE PLAZA Galleria Manila's Seven Corners Restaurant offers a "3-1 Pasta" with a Salad Bar in the restaurant's Lunch Buffet. Every group of four persons pays only for three. Dinner Delivery is on 24, Citadine Plaza Galleria Manila, cor. Ortigas and Asian Development Bank Avenues, Ortigas, Center. Call 6321200.

HOLIDAY INN GALLERIA'S Fish offers "Dine with 3, Be With Five." Every group of four gets one free buffet. Priced at P1,111, per person, the lunch or dinner buffet comes with a complimentary round of soft drinks or iced tea. This month, a rotating battery of daily specials is prepared. It includes bahn-bahnsiglad, tropical fruit bamboo, fresh seafood and oysters on a bed of ice, grilled beef chateaubriand, Filipino delicacies, Angus T-bone steak, or Bulol pandan served fresh on a coconut shell. Call 8337111.

MANILA PAVILION'S Fishbowl is offers The Executive's Lenten set menus this month. Set A includes Smoked Salmon Crepes with Dijon Mousseline and Tomato Cream Sauce; Broccoli Cream Cappuccino with Swiss Cheese Melt and Bread Twist; Fresh Fruit Frozen Dessert with Mint Syrup; Fettuccine in Fresh Crab Meat Au gratin Beef on the Bar Tenderloin with Forest Mushroom Gravy and Baked Banana Tart with Chocolate Ice Cream. Set B includes Grilled Prawn and Goose Liver Salad with Truffle Vinaigrette; Beef Consommé with Shiitake Mushroom; Lemon Sherbet; Oven-baked Rosemarian Salmon en Papillote Fricassee with Asparagus Cream; Tiramisu Chocolate Soufflé and Buchada. Rotisserie is open for lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday-Friday, and for dinner, 6:30-10:00 p.m., Monday-Saturday. Call 5267111 local 1905.

SEAFOOD lovers can try the Steamed Alaskan King Crab at Gumbo. It is served with mixed vegetables (carrots, green beans, corn and broccoli), plus mushroom and Cajun rice with Cajun butter sauce. To cap this special dish are the restaurant's desserts which you can avail for free upon order of this dish. Call 5568238, 19 and 8420126.

HAKKO Shangri-La's Chinese restaurant, Shang Palace, brings to Manila the celebrated Huaiyang Cuisine, March 12-25. Also known as Jiangsu cuisine, it is a fusion of the delicate tastes and styles of Yangzhou, Nanjing, Suzhou and Zhenjiang. The distinguished cuisine was chosen for the first state banquet of the new People's Republic and was also featured on the menu of the People's Republic's 50th anniversary celebration dinner. Hakkō Shangri-La is featuring its guest chefs from Western Fuda Hotel, Changchun: Roger Xu and Lenny Liu. Call 6480044 or fr 3800 ex. 7500/7199.

SUPER Bowl of Chiva introduces eight additions to its menu of authentic Cantonese dishes including the Soft Shell Crabs with Spicy Rain. The new dishes are available for a limited time only. Call 7378888.

BBQ Tiyan ng Bangus

EMBALSADO Bangus

Twin buffet offerings for Lenten observers and graduates

CARLOS FEATURES BACK-TO-BACK TREATS this month: the Bangus Festival and the Graduation/ET praises.

To highlight the Lenten season, the premier buffet restaurant in the country features its famous dishes during its Bangus Festival: Langhap Bangus, Inasbahang Bangus, Sigang Tiyan ng Bangus sa Sampalok, Escabeche Bangus—the main course, Shrimp na Tinapang Bangus and Inihaw na Bangus sa Baso at Mantika.

Celebrities also shares the joy of seeing the youth prepare for graduation day by giving a 50 percent discount to any graduation party with a minimum of six guests.

Celebrities restaurants are at Ayala Avenue, QC, 2/L, 300 North Edsa, QC, 4/L, Bldg B, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong; 2/L, Robinsons Place Ermita, Manila; Glorietta 3, Makati; G/L, Robinsons Galleria, Ortigas; Greenhills, Mandaluyong; 2/L, Circle Avenue Festival Mall, Alabang; G/F, SM City Clark, CSEZ Clark field Pampanga; and soon-to-open at G/L 3m, Isetta Grand East Mall.

Call 911 5599 for reservations and 421 0529 or 911 5222 for catering services.

BANGUS Tinapang Bangus

LUMPIANG Bangus

Freshly grilled specialties

FASTFOOD DINING IS NO LONGER just about burgers, fried chicken and carbonara choices. Healthier and tastier options are now available with a wider selection of affordable menu items for the more discriminating food-court customers.

Dencio Tuna Grill, which first opened in SM Megamall in 2004, is one such establishment. It takes fast-food dining to a whole new level as it features fresh grilled specialties, such as Grilled Tuna Belly and Grilled Tuna Panga, cooked fresh upon order.

Popular among the younger Dencio Tuna Grill regulars are its four varieties of sisig: pork, tuna, squid and bangus. Squid and tuna sisig are a favorite of weight-watching teenagers.

Meanwhile, the Sinigang na Panga is a crowd pleaser among big-eaters and families as the panga serving is generous, and with the tangy sinigang soup it can, in fact, feed a family of three.

Other grilled specialties include Grilled Squid, Inihaw na Liempo and Chicken Inasal.

The success of Dencio Tuna Grill in the Megamall has encouraged its owners, bank executive Shashley Uy and wife, former broadcast executive-turned-entrepreneur Betty Uy, to partner with movie mulls in making Tuna Tone Grill a healthy option in the food-courts.

Over the past two years, the branch-ers have opened in cinema malls including SM Mall of Asia, SM Megamall, SM North Edsa, Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Galleria and Shangri-la Plaza, with more to open before the end of 2007.

Fish and chips

4 servings 4 ea

1 ½ cup salt
Cooking oil, about 1 gallon/4 liters
Batter Sauce
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 ½ c mayonnaise
2 tbsp sweet pickles
1 tbsp mustard
2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
1 tbsp capers, drained and chopped
Salt to taste/pepper
Sugar to taste
Mix above ingredients.
Deep-frying tips:

✦ Make sure that the oil is at the right temperature.

✦ Do not overload the pan. Whatever it is you are frying must fit snugly.

✦ Before frying the next batch, bring oil back to its required temperature.

Odds and ends:

✦ Fish saved: Cod, fine Pollock, Haddock, Skates or any other white tender-fleshed fish will do, too.

✦ Serve fish and chips with salt and malt vinegar as the English do or with ketchup, tartar sauce, mayonnaise, even barbecue sauce!

✦ Throw in pickled onions, pickled eggs, fresh lemon wedges and gherkins.

✦ The standard side dish to fish and chips are mashed peas.

✦ French Fries are known as chips in the UK. Traditionally potatoes were fried in beef dripping many have switched away from that practice for health reasons.

✦ To complete the look, wrap your fish and chips in flaking paper and finish off with an extra layer of newspaper. Nothing could be more fish than this!

My new class schedules are out! Call: 9260096, 9273884.

E-mail the author at <mpalo@inquirer.com.ph>

Recipes for the meatless days

CLAMDADDY CRAB HOUSE AND American Grill is a brainchild of two restaurant groups, Red Crab and New Orleans.

The collaboration between Raymond Magdalena of the Red Crab group and his grandfather's best friend, Murray Stern of the New Orleans Restaurant, has resulted in the new dining adventure called ClamDaddy Crab House and American Grill. Their offerings include family favorites such as crabs, lobsters and oysters.

ClamDaddy (tel. 8863079) at G/L, Shangri-La Mall, Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong, shares the following recipes in time for Lenten observances of abstaining from pork, beef and chicken.

Cajun Crab Claws

80 g cashews
50 g cilantro
15 g onion
15 g celery

SOUPY Gumbo

2 g Cajun seasoning
1 g salt
1 g pepper
1 g thyme
1 g crushed bay leaf
1 pc egg
45 g breadcrumbs
160 g crab claws

Prepare crab claws by boiling in hot water. Open crab claws and leave the meat intact.

In a hot pan, heat up oil. Sauté onions, celery and garlic. Add crab meat and shrimps and cooked.

Season with salt, pepper, thyme, Cajun seasoning and crushed bay leaf.

Take the cashewnut filling and wrap around the crab claw. Take the crab meat dust and coat with flour, beaten egg, then coat with breadcrumbs.

Deep-fry in hot oil at 375°F until golden brown.

Serve with lemon-garlic butter, chipotle aioli and lemon wedges.

Soupy Gumbo

35 g tomato paste
30 g red bell pepper
30 g green bell pepper
3 g onions
5 g celery
5 g garlic
3 g cayenne pepper
2 g oregano
2 g fresh basil
1 g thyme
1 g bay leaves

CAJUN Crab Claws

1 g salt
1 g pepper
500 ml soup stock
200 g tomato
50 g okra
200 g crab
1 g gumbo seasoning

Saute onions, celery, red and green bell pepper until translucent. Add garlic. Add stock. Add oregano, thyme, fresh basil.

Add the cooked crab, tomato and okra. Simmer. Season to taste with salt, pepper and gumbo seasoning.

1

MIX butter in a large, heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add onions and cook until translucent.

2

ADD carrots, stir until tender. Add potatoes.

3

TURN off heat. Add flour. Using a wire whisk, mix until well combined.

4

TURN on heat to low fire. Slowly whisk in reserved clam juice.

5

MIX until mixture is dry-enough.

Chowder gives clams star billing

6

GRADUALLY add milk while stirring continuously.

7

STIR in water.

8

If you have a temperature probe, make sure it reaches 74°C. Otherwise, just simmer for five minutes. Stir and leave for another five minutes.

9

ADD clam meat.

10

ADD cooking cream and boiled salt. Simmer for five minutes to reduce liquid and thicken the soup.

11

AFTER at least three minutes, add oregano.

12

TRANSFER to a soup cup.

Text by Margie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rudel Ricafort

Step By Step

IT IS THE SEASON OF LENT and Catholics are supposed to observe meatless Fridays again.

Here is a recipe that even non-fish meat eaters will probably find irresistible. It is filling, invigorating and delicious.

For this seafood dish, neither fish nor shrimp gets star billing. Instead, we savor the goodness of clams, sold in the market live in shells or shucked fresh or frozen. If you available fresh in the market, we can also use canned clams.

Clams are high in protein and contain low amounts of calories and iron.

Chowder is a thick, chunky seafood soup, and clam chowder, the best known variety, is simply chowder with clams for its main ingredients.

Similarly, there are several versions of clam chowder, but the most popular are the New England and Manhattan clam chowders. New England-style chowder is made with milk or cream, while Manhattan is style with tomatoes.

"The nice thing about clam chowder is that you have a meal in itself (just the seafood and vegetables that comprise it)," says Jacqueline Ang of 100 Hail of Asia.

The New England Clam Chowder is the restaurant's all-time bestseller.

The ingredients for clam chowder recipe are clams, potatoes and carrots. With this recipe, the soup will turn out thick, even if canned clams are used.

Salarios says you will get plenty of the "chunky" flavor even if your meat is powdered instead from scratch.

"Because fresh clams can replace the canned clams if you have time or want to bring this recipe to the next level," he says.

Just remember when buying clams in fresh style—the shells are slightly closed. If a shell is slightly open, tap it lightly. If it doesn't snap shut, the clam is dead and should be discarded.

"What makes this chowder special is not just the flavor, but the way it looks, too. The simple combination of carrots, potatoes, clams and oregano adds depth to the broth.

But since the dish is simmered for a short period, vegetables keep their vibrant colors, adding to the soup's visual appeal.

Ingredients

- 80 g unsalted butter
- 1 (90 g) white onion, sliced
- 300 g carrots, cubed
- 500 g potatoes, cubed
- 1 kg plain flour
- 1 ½ liter water
- 2 liter UHT milk
- ¼ tsp dried oregano
- 2 cans (Wide) baby clams (meat, drained, juices reserved
- 240 ml (1lb) and 3tbs cooking cream
- Iodized salt

For suggestions, e-mail the author at <margie@inquirer.com.ph>

NEW England Clam Chowder

Delightful treats for the holy days

BRUSH UP ON YOUR CULINARY know-how. Prepare your very own version of the Roasted Vegetables, Corn Bread and Strawberry Shortcake courtesy of Glad and Cooking Basics Culinary School.

Roasted vegetables

- 1 zucchini
- 1 sweet green pepper
- 1 sweet red pepper
- 1 eggplant (medium)
- 1 onion
- ¼ c olive oil
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- Salt and pepper

Cut zucchini lengthwise in half. Core and seed sweet peppers. Slice cut into quarters.

Cut eggplant lengthwise in half. Cut onions into ½-inch thick slices. Lay vegetables on a baking sheet lined with Glad Bake Paper.

In a small bowl, combine olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Brush this mixture on the vegetables. Reserve some of the mixture for roasting.

Preheat oven to 400 °F. Roast vegetables until tender, about 15 minutes. Baste with olive oil mixture from time to time. Remove from oven.

Slice zucchini and eggplant diagonally into two-inch squares. Slice sweet pepper into strips. Mix all roasted vegetables together.

STRAWBERRY Shortcake

Corn Bread

- 1 c yellow cornmeal
- 1 c flour
- 1/3 c sugar
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp cream of tartar
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 c sour cream
- 2 c milk
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- ¼ c melted unsalted butter
- ¼ c corn kernels
- Extra melted butter for Glad Oven-ware pan

Preheat oven to 375 °F. Butter a square, Glad Glad Ovenware pan.

In a medium size bowl, sift cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking soda, cream of tartar and salt together. Add the sour cream, milk, eggs and melted butter. Stir in corn kernels. Stir just enough to mix.

Pour into greased Glad Ovenware pan. Bake in preheated oven for 25 minutes. Cool on a wire rack for a few minutes, slice and serve.

Strawberry Shortcake

For cake:

- 1 c unsalted butter, room temperature
- ½ c sugar (for batter mixture)
- ½ c sugar (for egg white mixture)
- 5 eggs, separated (room temperature)
- 8 tbsp milk
- 1 ½ c sifted baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 ½ c cake flour
- 1 tsp vanilla

Whipped topping:

- ½ c all-purpose cream, chilled overnight
- 2 tbsp powdered sugar
- 1 ½ c sliced strawberries

Preheat oven to 325 °F. Prepare one square, Glad Glad Ovenware pan.

Sift cake flour, baking powder and salt together in a medium size bowl. Divide dry ingredients into three parts. Set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar well until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks one at a time, making sure you beat it well after each addition. Yolks should be beaten well or you get a hard cake). Add vanilla and stir to blend.

Divide milk into two parts. Add one part of the dry ingredients to butter mixture alternately with one part of the milk, stirring each time just until ingredients are combined, starting and ending with the dry ingredients.

In a separate large mixing bowl, beat egg whites and sugar until it forms stiff peaks. Gently but thoroughly fold in the egg whites into the batter. Pour into the prepared Glad Ovenware pan.

Position on the lowest rack of the oven. Bake for an hour.

When cake is done, allow to cool on a rack before finishing with whipped cream and strawberries.

Whipped cream

Put chilled all-purpose cream in a bowl and whip until almost doubled in volume. Add powdered sugar and whip until stiff. Set aside and refrigerate before using.

Spread whipped cream mixture on the cooled cake and decorate with strawberries on top. Slice and serve.

ROASTED Vegetables

COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fenix

Joyful meatless days

IN THE MIDDLE OF AN eight-course dinner, someone said, "We can't eat the last course. It's made with fish guts. And it's Friday."

Everyone chipped in outrage. Then someone said, "It's lenguado!" Everyone was so relieved and grew out a good laugh.

Fridays, especially during the Lenten season, should be days of abstinence, days when one shouldn't eat meat.

That's what we learned in my years in Catholic schools. And it has been the practice since the Middle Ages.

Mark Kurlansky in his book "Cod" (Penguin Books, 1997) wrote how "The ending of flesh-eaten forbidden, but eating 'cold' fish was permitted. Because fish came from water, it was deemed cold ... meat was considered hot food."

But besides cold, it was a great opportunity for Basques who controlled the cod industry at the time. And the promise of selling cod in Muslim seas brought here by the Spaniards.

But big power spoiled selling baccalao. I find it difficult to appreciate what is essentially dried fish, deodored, then soaked like a sponge. Nothing can beat fresh fish cooked any way.

But for people who grew up waiting for Good Friday to taste *bacalao* cooked in the Spanish way, even with adaptations, the experience was something to look forward to.

In the book "Slow Food" (Artful Publishing, 2000), Felice Sta. Maria and Guillermo Romeo, Jr. both wrote of their familiar memories. Both have roots in Cavite where the port was the gateway through which ingredients needed for baccalao passed.

Sta. Maria's mother-in-law cooked the salted cod in three ways, adopted from the Basque "a la Vizcaina," "White fish prepared dried cod wasn't available, then called *tapa-tapa* (dialect) did as well. Dried chorizo, pepper (Capsicum annuum) was replaced by red bell peppers or canned pimientos. Thick olive oil and stuffed olives still red luscious were part of the prize."

Romeo Cinco's baccalao cooked after the Basque way a la pil-pil, trying the fish gently in oil in the pan using a circular motion. Then the salsa is cooked by sauteing in olive oil "the garlic cloves, lemon, bell pepper, chili pepper (siling labuyo) and fish broth" to which are added "pre-cooked chickpeas and green olives."

What is more interesting is how this essentially Basque dish is served with "steaming white rice and freshly grated orange in lemon or lemon pie, fluffy sweeper (green mango slices cured in lemon) or fruits."

Growing up, all my siblings knew we were no longer little children when we were included in the abstinence menu. When we were made aware that we should eat, that we knew were adults.

Seeing anothos, however, wasn't the difficulty to my family. Every day we had seafood. For little dinners had one main dish, one fish and one vegetable. This menu was handed down from my grandmother who, even when she ate alone, always had three viands.

It's not difficult to remember which fish was a family favorite, especially for the Lenten season. It was tinapang bukid (grey mullet) from my lola's hometown.

For people who grew up waiting for Good Friday to taste *bacalao* cooked in the Spanish way, the experience is always something to look forward to

PAPAW (clear shrimp) cooked in ginger and tomatoes

Each person would be responsible to bring, golden brown fresh fish monkey. My siblings and I learned how to eat this fish safely by removing the scales then bones near its stomach. In my family, no one will do those. The fish or cook open a stub for you. If you want more, you'd have to do it yourself.

My personalized favorite has a clinging trace of vinegar mixed in with a bit of fish sauce. Some chopped tomatoes and okra complete the dish.

Good Fridays are supposed to be days of quiet meditation. But it is the best time to travel outside Manila to enjoy traffic-less highways and catch a glimpse now and then of rituals being performed on the road such as mini-boxing events.

If not in the spirit of Good Friday, but those times have become entertainment. You don't have to wonder when I say it's because of what's on eaten.

At my friend Cleti Lizarro's home in Nasu, Laguna, lenten meals are a reunion. Nearby Ashara, showed me how to cook pancit-canton bijon using small, fresh water shrimps (papyat) caught in Laguna Lake. She explained the shrimp with fat-in-it, sauteed until almost all the liquid was gone, pounced in the coconut milk to simmer until almost dry.

More coconut milk was poured in and left to simmer once more. She cooked it over slow fire, unhurried, making sure that the shrimp absorbed all those flavors. The oil then separated, making a scrambled, rich every bite and melting, thinking to yourself that this is the way food should be eaten.

Gilda Cordero Fernando once brought me with her also to Laguna, to Lumbang, to witness food Friday this there and then to a house in Pakil for lunch. The memorable dish was also freshwater fish, cooked in a tomato sauce.

Pakil was to be the setting next week for an impromptu lunch to satisfy sophisms and moves hankering for me of my own Good Friday memories through Laguna. We were told that at the back of the church "The Rather" was open. The place was also a familiar joint. Sarnet the cause. But last day it was quiet.

It was a surprise to find Lory Tee, WWF Philippines president, who was taking a lunch break with his crew from Sandig Turtles Inn for the book "Ecoventura."

We family ordered the last piece of the guinnaang tilapia. It might have been hunger or the fact that there were very few things to be had but I thought that was the perfect fish on a Good Friday.

Sandig Turtles Inn is on Sangat island. I was told that for one of my siblings who went to Pakil recently. I hope we will be in Cavite this year discovering some treasure of an eating place when we decide to meet again on a Good Friday "on that long winding road."

E-mail the author at pinoyfoodie@yahoo.com

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Perfect Companion for Every Digital Camera

Salute to Filipino women

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA SALUTES the Filipino women this month with a series of activities starting with a two-day cooking demonstration by chefs from the mall's specialty restaurants at the Grand Atrium.

It is supported by Tribal, Relax and McCormick.

Chefs from Carnivora, Crocododdy and Fish & Co. will be featured March 17, 2-3 p.m. They will use products of Tribal and McCormick. On March 18, 2-3 p.m., the Center of Culinary Arts (CCA) and De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (DLSU-CSB) show the fundamentals of cooking using products of Genuino cooking oil maker Bioka.

The cooking demo is open to the public. Gifts from Tribal and Relax will be raffled off during the cooking demonstration (Shangri-La Plaza Marketing Dept. Tel. 6317555 and website www.shangrila-plaza.com).

Cherry treats

The Baguio-Benguet School of Culinary Arts offers the following classes:

March 16—Street and Savory Cheese Treats—All Savory Savory Stuffed Cheese Sticks, Cheese Crackers, Cheese Cookies, Cheese Puffs formed with leavened Dips (Walnuts), Fruit Jam etc.) Sweet "Desserts" Cream Puffs with Chocolate Sauce, Lemon Butter Cheesecake, Rose Easy White Chocolate Deco Cheesecake

March 17—Mushrooms—All Sweet Cream of Mushroom and Cheese Soup, Apricot with Mushroom Risotto with Mushroom Risotto, Veal with Mushrooms and Truffles with Garlic Mushroom Pasta, Grilled Steaks with Wild Mushrooms Bolognese, Scallop and Shrimp Sauté with Mushrooms Over Creamy Coffee Polenta

March 18—Tomato 1—Pizzettes Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Salad of Mozzarella slices two servings Pan Seared with Roasted Bell Peppers and with Grilled Portobello in Basil Oil. Chicken Breast with Artichokes and Cheese Served with Roasted Tomato and Campylobacter, Risotto Verde Sautéed with Choice of Italian Garlic Butter or Salsa di Pomodoro with Pan Fried Herb Focaccia, Mascarpone Cheesecake with Mixed Strawberries.

March 21—Tomato 2—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

March 22—Tomato 3—Pizzettes Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

March 23—Tomato 4—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

March 24—Tomato 5—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

March 25—Tomato 6—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

March 26—Tomato 7—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

March 27—Tomato 8—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

March 28—Tomato 9—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

March 29—Tomato 10—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

March 30—Tomato 11—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

March 31—Tomato 12—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

April 1—Tomato 13—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

April 2—Tomato 14—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

April 3—Tomato 15—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

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May 1—Tomato 43—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 2—Tomato 44—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 3—Tomato 45—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 4—Tomato 46—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 5—Tomato 47—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 6—Tomato 48—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 7—Tomato 49—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 8—Tomato 50—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 9—Tomato 51—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 10—Tomato 52—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 11—Tomato 53—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 12—Tomato 54—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 13—Tomato 55—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 14—Tomato 56—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 15—Tomato 57—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 16—Tomato 58—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 17—Tomato 59—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 18—Tomato 60—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 19—Tomato 61—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 20—Tomato 62—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 21—Tomato 63—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 22—Tomato 64—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 23—Tomato 65—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 24—Tomato 66—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 25—Tomato 67—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 26—Tomato 68—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 27—Tomato 69—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 28—Tomato 70—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 29—Tomato 71—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 30—Tomato 72—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

May 31—Tomato 73—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 1—Tomato 74—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 2—Tomato 75—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 3—Tomato 76—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 4—Tomato 77—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 5—Tomato 78—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 6—Tomato 79—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 7—Tomato 80—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 8—Tomato 81—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 9—Tomato 82—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 10—Tomato 83—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 11—Tomato 84—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 12—Tomato 85—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 13—Tomato 86—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 14—Tomato 87—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 15—Tomato 88—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

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June 17—Tomato 90—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 18—Tomato 91—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

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June 20—Tomato 93—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 21—Tomato 94—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 22—Tomato 95—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 23—Tomato 96—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 24—Tomato 97—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 25—Tomato 98—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 26—Tomato 99—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 27—Tomato 100—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 28—Tomato 101—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 29—Tomato 102—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

June 30—Tomato 103—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tomato Soup with Pesto Cream, Tomato Salad with Mozzarella Cheese, Tomato Pasta Sauce, Tomato Pizza, Tomato Cheesecake with Tomato Sauce.

July 1—Tomato 104—Fusion Italian Restaurant Recipes—All Sweet Tomato Bruschetta, Tom

LIFESTYLE

Clean— and meaning it

McDonald's shows how cleanliness is next to godliness

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

Show yourself for an exciting performance by one of the country's coolest bands.

IRAZ

Catch the hottest concerts, events and promos at Robinsons Place Manila.

Robinsons Place Manila

Text by Kaspin Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rudy Esparas

LET'S ADMIT IT. WE ARE A country fueled by fast food: burgers, fries, fried chicken. They're fun, delicious and easy. And with millions of fast-food meals sold each day, we naively assume they're all clean and safe. But they can be unsafe and, worse, deadly.

There's heard stories here and there about people discovering a worm in the salad, a toothpick in the rolls or a cheap metal object in the sandwich. Powers or not, these tales make us cringe and ultimately doubt the innocuous situation due to fast food kitchens.

Around the globe cleanliness and food safety in fast-food chains are much talked about and often debated. With the countless number of fast-food restaurants, keeping food safe and clean can be an enormous and difficult task.

As a result, diners may get sick from the secretive ways of the fast-food crew, such as handling ready-to-eat food with unwashed hands, undercooking the meat and sometimes cross-contamination.

So how do you know that the food you eat is safe and clean, and the quick-service restaurant is not making short cuts of standards on cleanliness and food quality?

Open Doors Program

The only way to find out is to take a peek into the kitchen. And what establishment would allow you to do that?

McDonald's, in its thrust to promote the brand's promise of food safety, cleanliness and quality, recently opened its kitchen to the public for one day under its Open Doors Program.

Kenneth Yang, president and chief executive officer of McDonald's Philippines, believes food safety is nonnegotiable for every operator in the food services sector.

"Open Doors Program started in McDonald's Australia and China," Yang said. "This was our way of telling people that we care about them and their families. We opened our kitchens to show just how thoughtful each meal is made, under the best and most caring conditions."

Most training conscious of quality and service standards include all fast-food restaurants take common sightseers. McDonald's restaurant managers are trained to under-

LEARN MORE

KENNETH Yang, president and CEO of McDonald's Philippines

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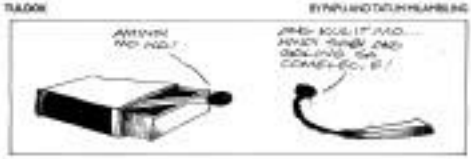
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYN GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN MANLOSA

BIRD MACHINE BY MAHAR ABREN

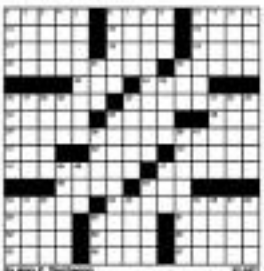
MAMBOBOSHOE BY JOHNO TUJOO

TULOOK BY PAPI LAND TATUM PALAMBELING



BEH BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

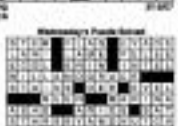


ACROSS
1 Napkin's alone
6 Shield: Prefix
11 Hockey Hall of Famer Howe
14 Lacrosse
15 Alcohol
16 Ltd. add-on
17 Bird's, to a bird
18 Ben Hall
19 Cattle lowe
20 Start of Lion Tuer Sup
22 Cell dividers, Dr. Jekyll
23 Alive at three
24 Federation down
25 Chromatic violins
26 Designed
34 Thermoplastic resin
35 Citizens rights org.
36 Tilted
37 Point 2 of quip
38 Tech major
42 Throwing knives, e.g.
43 Astrological region
44 Thought
45 Philosophers of Bucolia
46 Advisory gathers
47 Go fast
48 Stock buy
51 Lion of folk
52 Dwell
60 Replenished
61 Half-cricket work
62 Ask an authority
63 Narrowly replace
64 Ballpoint advice
65 Frankfurter's lunch
66 Lacking color
67 Grocery

DOWN
1 Sports page fig.
2 Motoring
3 Centimetre
4 Instrument
5 Lubricates
6 Haggle, e.g.
7 Lessen
8 Alaska port
9 Hours of rules!
10 LENNA grad
11 Hulk wrestler
12 Libel
13 Apologizes
21 Finished a shot
23 Swear under oath
25 Mr. Hoffman org.
26 Colonial regimes
28 Cell biologist
29 Olympic dash distance
30 Tango type
31 Market
32 Softened with dull pains
33 Inventor of the rubber-glass
40 Harmful ingredient
41 Wish the plunge
43 Plato and Socrates
45 Federation
46 Indians
47 Cumbrian city
48 Constitutional
49 Hands down
51 Apathy
52 The Thinker
Poet
56 Medics
57 Idiots endeavor
58 Mimic
59 Software's support
61 Fairy-godmother
62 Body of Water
63 Hedgehoused
67 New York canal
68 Chem.
69 Tissue spindle

By Alan P. Stuchberg
Huntington Beach, CA

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved



HOROSCOPE

THIS BOOK TODAY: You enthusiastically pursue your goals. You like to achieve goals that help others as well as yourself. Be careful that you don't overdo it, you like to drink or watch good heights. Your charming enthusiasm and charisma make you very attractive to others. This year you will soak up interesting psychological experiences for the past love years in order to overcome your unwilling ones.

BORNERS: All the Longists, actress, David Silverman, comedian, Alan Rickman, actor/director.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a good day to learn something new. You are usually working on learning philosophy, religion or politics. Also travel plans. If you work in publishing, you can accomplish a lot today.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You can usually learn how to do new something or other with ease. Watch your property and your obligations to others today. You have a good understanding of both sides of the picture.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is the time to travel to learn new things from the world of the whole parties.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): What communication skills you have! You find it easy to establish a rhythm. Avoid temperament and emotions to problems. You have plenty of positive today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You have a way to make your point with a charm to everyone around you today. Enjoy through a hard work. Money and people working with children will be productive today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Others may not see this wonderful creature of today, but you do. Your mind is in high gear. You can be an artistic today. You know what you need to get done.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is an excellent day for communicating with others. Your thinking is optimistic and confident, yet you're also realistic about what can be done.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): There's much to learn and talk about today. Don't worry about how other. Does it mean have to do the day, your feel are on the present. Don't over judgment.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might play a parental role with someone today. You feel you have the advancement to take care of someone who is in need.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): If you don't communicate something practical and solid, you're fooling yourself. Be careful when you're with others or you'll overcomplicate something practical and solid. Avoid the temptation to control your own company. (You have a lot to think about.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Watch your unconventional ideas! Others may not understand. Impress to your own ideas. Don't get into summer debates. You have positive thoughts, and you're very good at communicating with others. (This is a winning combination.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Everything around you is very creative today. Use your good sense of humor. Don't worry every area is blessed with a lot of luck. If you make will be solid and successful.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

3						2	6	8
2				1				
4			3	9				
						1		
	9	4		2		3	7	
		3						
				5	9			2
				7				4
7	4	8						1

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	1	9	6	2	8	3	4	5
8	6	5	7	4	3	2	1	9
2	3	4	9	1	5	7	8	6
1	7	8	4	6	9	5	3	2
3	5	6	2	7	1	4	9	8
4	9	2	5	3	6	8	7	1
6	4	7	1	5	2	9	8	3
5	8	1	3	9	4	6	2	7
9	2	3	8	6	7	1	5	4

Difficulty Level ★★★

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THE CONSUMER

Environmentalist finds kindred souls in supermarket

By Linda B. Bolido

WHEN DOROTEO CAMOS HAD MADE A pleasant discovery. The friend out there was an establishment that shared her concern for the environment.

Here's her story:

"Being an environmentalist, I make it a point to recycle grocery bags when I go to the wet market in Marikina. At the Robinsons Metro East Supermarket, I told the cashier and bagger to just all my purchases in old Robinsons plastic bags which I brought.

"Both smiled and said Robinsons had been encouraging shoppers to bring their old plastic bags for reuse when doing the grocery. However, they had been disappointed because people ignored the notice [posted] at the cashier counters.

"May I commend Wilson, the bagger, and Cecille, the cashier, as well as Ruby Rose Manejara, the cashiering supervisor, for being environment-conscious and for their excellent customer service?

"To address the problem of plastic bags and its effect on the environment, perhaps Robinsons can provide some sort of incentive to shoppers who bring their old plastic bags when doing the grocery [or even when] shopping [at the department store].

"The attitude of the staff of the supermarket about plastic bags is greatly encouraging. I hope to see more people like those not only in the malls but even in community stores."

Camos's decision to reuse the plastic bags brings me to another story.

Environmental pact

A group of friends in San Francisco decided in 2005 to mind their 5s—reduce, reuse, recycle.

According to a report by Jill P. Dunleavy in The New York Times, over dinner, a group of friends started discussing the damage done to the environment by consumerism.

The group "ended up challenging one another to not buy anything new for six months."

By mid-2006, the informal group had become Compact and it had built a groundswell of supporters, even in Europe and Australia.

The latest estimate is 9,000 members just in the United States.

John Perry, co-founder of Compact, told the Times that what made their group different was they aimed not just "to scale back financially but to reduce the environmental toll of the American consumer lifestyle."

Compact members, the Times reported, swore to recycle what they had and bought only used or second-hand goods.

The only things they buy fresh or brand new are food, health-related products and personal things like underwear. They are also free "to spend as much as you like on life's more intangible pleasures, like spaces or people."

Dunleavy quoted Compact member Marlaina Abbott-Aceto of Charleston, South Carolina, as saying, "It's about mindful consumption, not about depriving ourselves."

Abbott-Aceto was reportedly a nonstop shopper before she saw the light. She said packages would arrive from eBay and she could not even remember what she ordered.

From being overwhelmed by the clutter, bills and stuff she did not need, her new philosophy has not only saved her cash but lessened her stress, too.

For many people, it was not just the savings financially that they appreciated. Many members said the best dividend they gained was time.

Bridget Stuart of Laguna Beach, California, said she was playing tennis once again. "I used to play tennis all the time, and the biggest thing that supplanted it was shopping."

A Compact member only since December, Renate told the Times she now had more time to invite friends over for dinner, to play board games and take walks with her children.

That believers just how much of her time was taken up by mailing.

Feedback

We thank the Department of Trade and Industry and Manuel Asensio, vice president/head of the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) Subway Management Division, for acting on the complaint of reader Cristhoro Faye B. Tumboc of Makati City.

Her car broke down at the South Luzon Expressway and she was asked to pay by the towing crew what she felt was an exorbitant fee.

In her latest e-mail, she said Asensio wrote to apologize for the incident. The PNCC official said her fee would always be towing company to penalize the concerned crew.

Graduate culinary school teaches passion for cooking

AT THE ACADEMY OF INTERNATIONAL Culinary Arts (AICA), aspiring chefs have a day that begins at 6 a.m. and won't end till 10 at night. On any given day, the students need prepare breakfast for 40 people and, with barely enough breathing space, repair back to their pots and pans for a five-course lunch that will serve another 40.

"It's easy to cook good food, but it's not so easy to cook good food for 40 people," said Swedish chef Alan Lee, 37, who heads AICA's Master's Diploma Course in Culinary Arts, the first ever culinary master's program in the Philippines. During the nine-month diploma program in International Culinary Arts and Professional Kitchen Management, students learn the ropes.

"Cooking is not about working but about passion," Lee said. For someone who cut his teeth—or sharpened his knives...at Shilhabatomic in Stockholm, an industrial town that had "iron dots, an industrial town that had "iron [sic] balls shop and one pizzeria," Lee knows about passion only too well. He began working at age 14 while still in school, working two nights a week at a local pub before he was discharged from to do kitchen work—"putting onions."

Leaving school at age 19, Lee built his culinary career in European capitals like Stockholm and London before spending the last 12 years as an executive chef in a cruise ship.

While teaching is a first for him...he provides over a class of 30-12 students only...Lee brings with him not only the exacting standards he learned as a professional chef, he is also eager to impart the value that being a chef is not just a profession but a "way of living."

Chef and AICA co-owner Bob Pengson called the AICA curriculum "the fewest of culinary programs." AICA not only gave students ready to work in international restaurants, it also exposes them to "the better" and make a real difference in the food they prepare and the service they offer, Pengson said.

The Academy of International Culinary Arts is located near the Holly Verde Country Club at 2/F, Sky Way Towers, Capt. Henry P. Javier St., Pasig City. Visit www.aicaphilippines.com, e-mail aica-chef@yahoo.com, or call 6721113 or 6721227.

LEMON Chicken Lollies (above) and Roast Beef Pasta

Home-cooked party fare for the graduates

HERE'S A TOAST TO THE graduates. Make a blast of a graduation party with these recipes from Jun Miguel Pura Foods Culinary Center as they celebrate a milestone in their lives. Delicious but suggestions include Stuffed Tomatoes, Garlicky Mushroom sauce, Roast Beef Pasta and Lemon Chicken Lollies, all so easy to prepare when hosting a memorable bash.

For more recipes and tips to impress a variety of dishes, log on to www.mypurefoods.com.

Lemon Chicken Lollies

½ k Magnolia Chicken Breast Chicken Lollipops
2 pc egg
4 tsp Purefoods Supreme Cane Vinegar
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
½ c cornstarch
1 c Magnolia Nutrioil (Palm Olein)

Lemon Glaze:

1/3 tsp lemon juice
1 tsp ginger, finely chopped
2 tsp lemon peel, cut into thin slices
½ tsp soya
½ c sugar
4 tsp cornstarch

Mix the egg, vinegar, salt, pepper and cornstarch with the chicken lollipops. Set aside to marinate for at least 10 minutes.

Deep fry chicken in preheated oil until golden brown.

To make the sauce: Combine all the ingredients in a small saucepan. Let simmer on low heat until slightly thickened and sauce clears up. Dip chicken lollipops in the sauce. Serve immediately.

Makes eight servings.

Roast Beef Pasta

250g uncooked fettuccine
500 g Monterey Beef, subjuice on
½ tsp salt
pinch pepper
½ c Magnolia Gold Butter
Gravy sauce:
½ c Magnolia Gold Butter
¼ c flour
1 pc red bell pepper, diced
2 c beef broth
1 tsp liquid seasoning
Toppings:
Magnolia Cheddar Cheese, grated
parsley, chopped

Cook fettuccine according to package directions. Set aside. Season beef with salt and pepper then lightly fry in butter. Set aside.

To make gravy sauce: Melt butter in a saucepan. Whisk in the flour making sure no lumps are formed. Add in the bell pepper and cook for a minute. Gradually add the beef broth then simmer until slightly thickened. Add in the beef together with its juices and let simmer with the gravy sauce for 5 minutes over low heat. Adjust seasoning according to taste.

Pour over the pasta. Serve hot topped with grated cheese or fresh chopped parsley.

Serves seven.

Stuffed Tomatoes

101 g potatoes, boiled and diced
200g carrots, boiled and diced
224 g crab sticks, cubed
3 tbsp green peas
125 g Magnolia Chicken Hamburger Fillet, boiled and shredded
½ c lettuce, chiffonade
½ c Magnolia Cheddar Cheese, diced
¼ c mayonnaise
2 tbsp mustard
Salt
White pepper
7 pc fresh tomatoes, blanched, peeled, seeded and sliced into quarters

Mix the first seven ingredients. Mix mayonnaise and mustard. Season with salt and pepper. Mix into the potato mixture. Garnish with chopped parsley.

Makes 10 pieces.

Your personality in a coffee cup

STARBUCKS CUSTOMERS ARE WELCOME to discover their unique drink, to enhance their Starbucks experience and to indulge in their own personalized beverage by no **means by their drinks.**

"Starbucks beverages are handcrafted, which means our baristas can make your drink any way you want," said Ging Bernal.

His, bond of marketing. "It can be tailored to reflect your personality or mood, just like how a piece of clothing can show off your personal style. By having fun and experimenting with different options, you can express your personal taste and express your individuality."

There are hundreds of beverage possibilities to be discovered given the numerous options and modifiers. But customers may choose from Offerings include flavored syrups created exclusively for Starbucks, and beverage modifiers, such as soy milk, nonfat milk, or an additional espresso shot which can be specified to suit your personality in popular drinks, such as a Caffe Latte, Caffè Mocha or a Cappuccino.

This season, Starbucks is also introducing delicious seasonal flavors like Peppermint Mocha and Gingerbread Latte.

COFFEE passion at Starbucks

well as a reduced-fat strawberry cheesecake and a reduced-fat cocoa coconut toffee chicken sandwich.

Iced tea alternatives

SOLA IS A PREMIUM brand of iced tea. Launched more than ten years ago, Sola offers a healthier beverage alternative...iced tea that has more taste and less sugar.

Sola now becomes an even better alternative with its latest product entry Sola Jasmine Green Tea and Sola **Lemon Green Tea. A refreshing brew of** instant green tea and **fresh extracts, the Sola** Lemon Green Tea contains real green tea and lemon extracts, while the Sola Jasmine Green Tea offers a hint of Jasmine flower, a type of tea flavor popular in China.

Sola's new line of green iced tea contains antioxidants called catechins that help prevent or reduce the chances of cancer and can aid in lowering blood cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

The delicate balance of green tea, fruit flavors and sugar is what differentiates Sola best. Unlike Tea Sola, the latest Sola Iced Green Tea only contains 16 grams of sugar per serving, way below other beverages which contains substantially more sugar and calories.

The Sola line of iced tea is available in all leading supermarkets, convenience stores, restaurants and cafes nationwide. Call 4116123.21; e-mail: sola@greendot.com; visit www.colalimited.com.

Swedish chef presides over the "Future of culinary programs"

FOR 25 years, McDonald's has seriously adhered to food quality, safety and cleanliness.

The Academy for International CulinaryArts

The Professional School for the Global Chef

Master's Diploma in Culinary Arts

The AICA Master's Diploma in Culinary Arts gives you the ability to further better your professional repertoire and makes you more eligible for employment opportunities here and abroad. The course is headed by **Swedish International Executive Chef Mats Valdemar** and is available in 8 weeks or 16 weeks duration. Classes open: March 20 - June 19, 2007.

Foie Gras & Appetizers (For Professionals Only)

Learn how to clean, prepare and apply various cooking methods to foie gras as well as other contemporary appetizers with AICA's masters program. Class opens: March 20 – 23, 2007

Diploma in International Culinary Arts Management

AICA's Diploma in International Culinary Arts Management allows you to begin a promising career towards becoming an Executive Chef ... AICA offers a 5-month course packed with quality instruction at just the right time and duration. In addition to providing the finest education and training in the country, the Academy goes one step above the rest by playing an active role in the placement and employment of its students.

Classes opens: June 5 and July 10, 2007

Fundamentals of Professional Cooking

AICA's Fundamentals of Professional Cooking will train you into becoming a very confident cook in a professional and recreational manner. The 12-session course allows you to produce any recipe imaginable and is available in weekday and weekend schedules.

Class opens: April 10, 2007

For all courses mentioned above, please call the school for rates for details and other information. There are only 14 slots in each batch so applicants are urged to register immediately.

Suite 207 Cityway Town Towers, St. Capt. Henry Javier St., Pasig City Tel. 571-2110 | 571-2111

Website: www.aica.edu.ph Email: aica@pacific.net.ph

Clean–and meaning it

From page D1

sound food preparation in addition to keeping their finances in order and maintaining high standards of cleanliness and fast service.

"Customers can be sure the absence of dirt, but the absence of disease-causing bacteria in the area," said Margot Torres, McDonald's vice president for marketing. "With this Open Doors Program, we gave our customers a special privilege to visit our restaurants and to witness some of the little things that we do or order to make sure we meet the kind of service they expect of us."

One-day affair

McDonald's conducted a tour of its kitchens for pre-selected teams and their families and friends, and some drew lots celebrities. The tour media stars unfortunately in selected outlets in Ermita, Ortigas, Roxas Norte, Laguna, Quezon Avenue, Las Piñas, Ilaya, Pasadena, Indanang, Cebu, South Luzon, Bacolod, Boracay, Manila, Lucena, Naga, Bacolod, Cagayan, Pangasinan, Valenzuela Road, Olongapo, and Bel Air, Rosa, Laguna.

The guests were shown McDonald's six different stations, starting with the hand washing station, where is the first step toward food safety. They also had a glimpse of the cook station, where the sandwiches are prepared.

Guests witnessed how McDonald's comes up with its famous Chicken Mcdo from breading to frying. They also got to inspect the grill area, where Big Mac, Double Cheeseburger and Quarter Pounder are cooked.

Guests were also presented the production, ceiling station, where all orders are placed and food products are kept warm and fresh. Lastly, they were served around the French fries station, the most popular station of all.

"We want to show every guest is welcome at our McDonald's. It is implementing proper hygiene and sanitation practices.

They couldn't believe that. Media crew members wash their hands with warm running water, using specially formulated mild

MCDONALD'S goes by the rule, "If it's not right, don't serve it."

FOOD safety is unnegotiable for every operator in the food service industry.

LIFESTYLE

SEAFOOD paella, also known among savvy Filipinos as arroz a la Valenciana

Yes, they really have Arroz a la Valenciana in Spain

Like 'puto,' restaurants and food stalls prepare *paella* in large pans but sell in small portions

Text and photos by Linda B. Bohlin

IT IS ALL RIGHT TO ASK about *Arroz a la Valenciana* in Valencia, Spain.

Unlike in China where your search for *kungpao* Shanghai or *pansit* Canton is likely to be met with blank faces, many Valencians are likely to know immediately what you are talking about.

Now generally known by the generic name paella, some people say Valencians invented the rice dish that has become a mainstay of celebratory meals in the Philippines.

In the Mediterranean city, paella, in all sorts of variations, is standard daily fare. Like *puto*, restaurants and food stalls prepare large batches of paella and scoop a portion depending on how many people order it.

Valencia brings a mixed-dry seafood paella, of course, the best-known. But *arroz* Valenciana can also be made with vegetables, meat, poultry and rabbit, among others.

Rice is, needless to say, the chief ingredient. While Filipinos tend to overload the dish with the other ingredients, leaving very little room for rice, *arroz* Valenciana is primarily that—rice.

An order may come with one large piece or two smaller pieces of chicken but everything else is rice and some vegetables, making for a very filling meal that often makes it unnecessary

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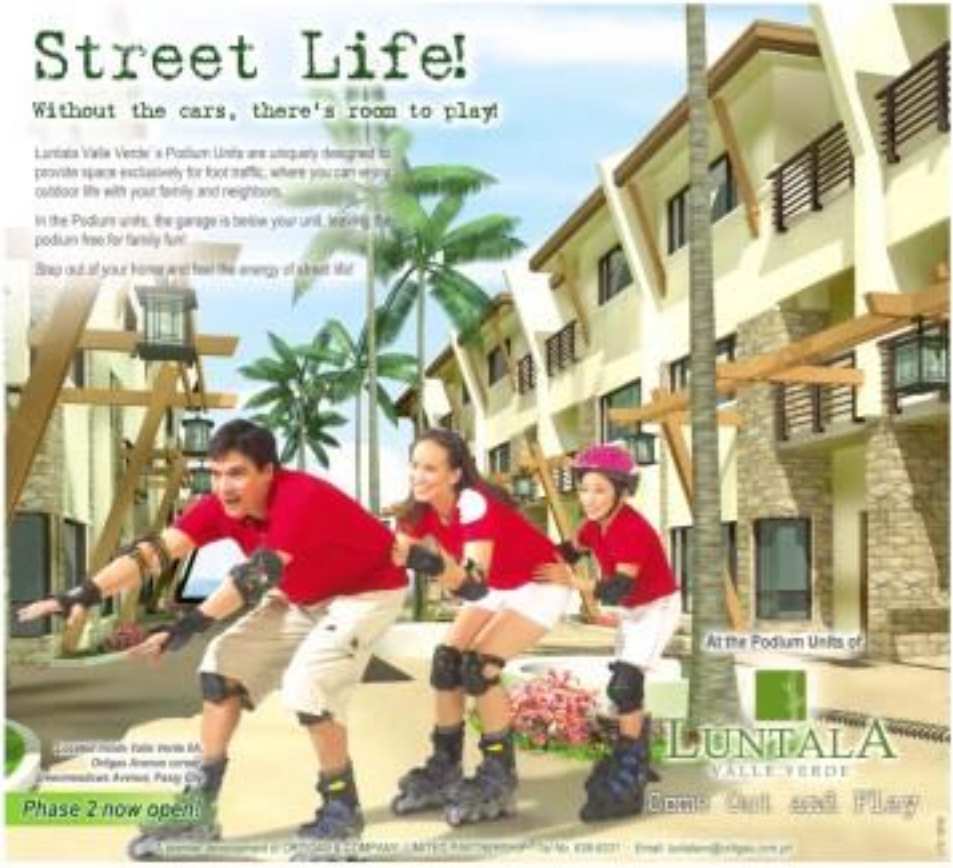

CALAMARE or squids's digitals grilled rather than fried and served with a vinaigre vinaigrette.

TINTA clams, served as a soupe, look like the native tulya.

PESCADITO or little fish, another tapa

THEY may be food for you, but artwastics colors make these sweets irresistible.

Yes, they really have Arroz a la Valenciana in Spain

From page 11

easy to leave other dishes.

Pan-tastic

But Valencia paella also comes in all sizes. You only have to visit market stalls to see just how many sizes of the rice dish are available. Paella pans, from saucers-sized to something so big as to take a bath inside, are on sale like this group.

If Valencianos are not fruitful about claiming credit for paella, they are equally eager to let visitors know just how Valencia-orange got its name, not by word but simply by making sure they do not miss it wherever they go.

Orchards planted to the citrus are among the first things a visitor sees from the airport. In parks and roadsides, the oranges, many now still heavy with fruit in late autumn, stand proudly beside ornamental plants.

Of course, Valencia, like any other part of Spain, is also about wine, arroz, cheese, and other delicacies Spanish food, which Filipinos have come to know and embrace even centuries after the Spaniards have left the archipelago, is really a major tourist attraction.

But place were the cathedral has made Valencia famous for years—malls, however, arises, almost a landmark—serving primarily diverse cuisine. At any time of day, for modest yet-not-cheap prices, indeed in a quiet, narrow lane off the Plaza de la Reina fronting the cathedral, a filled with people eager to taste the small cooked, battery, tapped and roasted cheese paired with thick, rich hot chocolate.

Bulging flea market

The entire portion of the building a filled with stalls that sell freshly baked bread, cookies, fruits, vegetables, cheeses, sausages, meats, fish, and other delicacies as well as clothes and other materials. At some fruit and vegetable stalls, the inside of the building becomes a flea market. People in costumes sell a wide range of goods from gilded fruits and vegetables to medicinal potions.

But the place to go to if you are interested in food, or simply a tourist eager to savor the feeling Valencia is has to offer, is the Central Market. Though the beautiful old building may not be particularly photogenic for a while as a major renovation has covered its facade in steel beams and wooden planks, tourists can still get in—hence, you can occasionally hear accented Spanish, Dutch or Chinese and see the displays in glass shelves and vegetables and fruits in orderly rows of tightly packed.

There are purple broccoli, lettuce in all its variations, red and white radish, and a lot more. Though the fresh products are not the kinds of things you can bring home as souvenirs, the Central Market is definitely a must-see in Valencia.

ZWISHING in other oil, paella aren't quite like what Filipinos encounter here.

HAM is among served tapas—you get a better a sense. Though tapas translate into snacks, they are often more like appetizers.

A BREAD vendor in a weekend league with fresh, goodies and pies.

VALENCIA cathedral on Plaza de la Reina

A DELICATESSEN sells sausages, hams, cheeses, and other goodies associated with Spain.

The disappearing tradition of the 'tinungbo'

By Engr. Iris Q. Bengzon

After I leave The last of by on seniors in fall year's Forum Gumbra Bernardo Food Writing Awards, this essay was written by Engr. Iris Q. Bengzon, a lawyer now pursuing a doctorate degree at University of the Philippines Diliman. The 'tinungbo' is an Ilocano delicacy cooked in bamboo tubes and made during the period after the harvest in November and Christmas, a period called Amaplakdaan or Dumagyang.

THE AUTHOR

WHEN WE WERE CHILdren a long time ago, in that valley where the legend Lam-ang lived his adventures, there was an interregnum between the harvest time of rice in November and Christmas time in December called Panagdadanes.

Roughly translated as "Offering Time" or "Thanksgiving," this was the time when members of the community brought before the church altar a part of their harvest—rice, chicken, fruits and vegetables. The observance was marked by the physically taxing preparation of a rice delicacy cooked in bamboo tubes called tinungbo or tubeng-a (we Ilocanos call the offering anew as a Tagalog).

Laborious

The labor-intensive making of this rice delicacy itself symbolized the toil of the community: by valuable they presented the bounty that the people were offering to their god. Thus, a father or two of disciples would accompany the dance (offering). Meanwhile, those unable to make overnight could prepare other kinds of "kakanin."

The main ingredient is either ordinary rice, pure or mixed with ordinary rice, depending on one's taste or the availability of ideal Pinoy Rice would make very sticky tinungbo. The rice should be pounded into powder using the alo (pestle) and the ulong (mortar), or ground by the rotary gilingan.

The other main ingredient is coconut milk (not sweet) from thoroughly mature coconuts, or the grated meat of young coconut or buko.

Tinungbo using coconut milk would last longer than those that had been grated coconut meat. The mixture would be sweetened with panocha or melted (upgraded) Ilocanos sugar called pa-tim-bang-pang (more crystalline). Mostly salt would be used, but also powdered coconut milk or meat, and even vanilla sugar in form of cream puree.

The bamboo tubes must be prepared from segments of the fresh or green (not dry) bolo variety (not the lowland variety) bamboo that are free from any drilled or holes. The mouth of each tube must be cut in a tapered manner to allow for the expansion of the cooking mixture.

To close the mouth of the tubes, stoppers must be made from banana leaves that have been pressed over fire (to soften them and make them flexible). Four strength of the stoppers inside the tube, up to one half or three fourths of the tube only, and close the mouth with the banana leaf stoppers.

Two ways

There are two ways to cook the tinungbo. The usual way is to dig a pit. Fill the pit with dry wood and bone then start dry once in to low charcoal. Arrange the filled bamboo tubes over the mouth of the pit, with the longest part of the exposed mouth facing the sky. The tubes must be constantly turned to ensure equal cooking and the distribution of the coconut cream (if such is used).

When the bamboo becomes dull green, is hot to touched, opens near tube to ensure and see whether the rice delicacy is cooked. If you want crusty tinungbo, allow the tube to burn a little. Warning, though, this delicacy using pure dear and cooked till crusty would be quite hard and chewy when it gets cold.

The other way of cooking this delicacy would be to use a sufficient pile of rice husks. Bury the tubes in the pile and burn the husks. Make sure that the rice husks on top and below the tubes are burnt to ensure even cooking. Observe the same procedure above.

Tinungbo is best eaten when cold. To make eating easier, cut the tube into two (crosswise). Then cut one half-tube into one or four segments. The color of the delicacy ranges from golden to deep brown, depending on the color of the ingredient or the dumagyang, and the length of roasting. The tinungbo can last up to a week. However, those using grated coconut meat must be eaten within two days as cooked coconut meat spoils easily.

Almost lost

The tradition of the tinungbo has nearly disappeared as Church traditions have changed to accommodate the many diversities of today. The symbolic burning of the Pasaplakdaan has also been lost as more families in this contemporary order have come to depend more and more on the money sent by a parent, a sibling or a child working abroad.

Likewise, young people nowadays spend hardly in a way of living. From the spirit of giving Thanks to God who has made man's toil fruitful has become so rare in a society that expects to take without giving back.

Incidentally, rice is no longer harvested only in November since technology and seeds/crops have made rice planting season, decline, to be done at any time of the year.

Even the celebration of our Savior's birth has so matured that everything and everybody are commercialized, except the birthday celebrant. Pinoy(e) is lil, I feel myself yearning for Ilocano's tubeng-a. I feel the coldness of the approaching Christmas season in my bones.

The laborious making of the rice delicacy is a symbol of the toil of the people to produce God's bounty

How do you like your chocolate?

WHEN IT COMES TO CHOCOLATE, people are at a loss on which is prefer, white or dark?

White chocolate contains cocoa butter, sugar, milk solids, vanilla and lecithin, which makes for a truly sweet and scrumptious taste.

Dark chocolate gives a somewhat bitter taste because it isn't as processed as white or milk chocolate, meaning it contains more cocoa. However, dark chocolate is more health-giving than other chocolate variants because it contains more flavonoids, potent plant compounds that slow down the processing of bad or LDL cholesterol into arterial fluid clogs the arteries.

You can enjoy both the taste and health-giving goodness of these chocolate types with Cadbury Gold. The amount of Cadbury's chocolates, Cadbury Gold features the finest blend of dark and milk chocolate cocoa.

Cadbury Gold also comes loaded with generous amounts of tangy fruits, crunchy oven-roasted nuts and crisp wafer pieces.

Cadbury Gold is available in 25g tablets and shareit, and spread and related variants.

A Toast to Your Child's Graduation

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For a minimum purchase of P2000, your child, the graduation celebrant gets a choice of complimentary order of Manila Bay's Southern Charmed Fried Shrimp or a T-Shirt

COMPLIMENTARY

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ENTERTAINMENT

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EDDIE GUTIERREZ

GERMAN Moreno, who financed the project, escorts good friend Gloria Romero

CANDAO SANCHEZ

ELIZABETH OROPESA

COJA RODRIGUEZ

Mowelfund unveils Paradise of Stars

By Nini Valera

THE STARS came in droves on Saturday night to witness the unveiling of the Paradise of Stars at the Movie Workers' Welfare Foundation Inc. (Mowelfund) compound in Quezon City.

Gelimar Moreno financed the creation of the piece of "paradise" at the 6,700-square-meter Mowelfund property, transforming a portion of the garden in the Mowelfund Plaza into a veritable Walk of Fame showcasing 86 five-pointed stars in bronze.

The stars bear the names of movie greats being honored for their outstanding contributions to the film industry.

"This is my legacy to local movies," said Moreno, who also financed the four Walk of Stars patterned after the Hollywood version in Lilac, Quezon City. "I want future generations to remember the biggest stars of today."

Moreno, Raya Gerina in show his clothes, had star-shaped heights lights installed all over the place — and at the time — making it a virtual heaven on earth.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremonies, lifetime members of Boys Forms and popular stars were also unveiled.

The members of the likes of Robin Padilla, Jolina Magdangal, Sharon Cuneta, Bobo

ACHIEVEMENT 82

EDDIE GARCIA

Film board: RP movies grew by 40 % from '05

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THERE'S GOOD NEWS FOR the local movie industry, according to the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP).

In its 2006 accomplishment report to President Macapagal-Arroyo, Rolando "Dado" Alcuaz, the film board's chair, declared that "The local film industry showed a remarkable turnaround in 2006. The [economic] revenues ... grew by 40 percent ... from P1.825 billion in 2005 to P1.437 billion in 2006."

Alcuaz furnished Inquirer Entertainment a copy of the report and, in an exclusive interview, echoed it: "The value of foreign major studios declined [from P5.401 billion in '05 to P2.278 billion in '06]. Same with the profits of foreign indypros, down from P900 million in '05 to 'only' millions in '06. In 2006, the only sector that showed growth was local movies."

Alcuaz said the figures were provided by the Office of the President Committee on Information and confirmed by the Eddie Mallari, head of the National Cinema Association of the Philippines and the Motion Picture Inc. o Film Piracy Council.

"There was a strong showing of local films last year, but there were other factors to consider," Consuegra said. "One of them is the sustained fight against piracy by the Council and the Optical Media Board headed by Ma. Montanez."

Alcuaz added: "The upward trend is accurate because even MIO CBS, in its third quarter 2006 disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, reported that four of its movies earned over P100 million. According to a source, it earned a total of P550 million." He revealed that the report did not include "Xerxes, Kasali, Kaabo," Star Cinema's Metro Manila Film Festival top-grosser, which posted P142 mil.

Sun.Star ticket sales last year.

The income obtained a copy of ABS-CBN's quarterly report, which confirmed Alcuaz' findings. "Under of entertainment" it says up by 34 percent to P980 million in 2006, boosted by the strong performance of the film division, which released eight movies compared to four [in 2005]."

The ABS-CBN report continued: "Out of the eight four Cinema films, four— Crazy Love Ou Da'Ju, 'Close to You,' 'Sukob' and 'You Are the One'— ground more than P100-million each. In particular, 'Sukob' earned over P200 million."

The positive development to local movies, Montano observed, confirmed one major FDCP theory: "Quality sells."

In the accomplishment report, Montano noted: "It is the thrust of the FDCP that the growth of the local film industry is hinged on

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

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STAR-STRAPPED Signs on the trees lend a virtual fantasy setting.

LILIA Dizon, Espiridion Laxa and Bella Flores

The new walk is expected to generate income from local movie tourists

Mowelfund unveils . . .

From page F1

Mahilum, Sung Sevilla, Rudy Fernandez, Eddie Garcia, Tessie Agana and Boy Alano; Marisol Deluna, Imelda Rivera, Amalia Fuentes, Brigitte dela Rosa, Joseph Marcelo, Vilma Santos were donated by GMA 7 and ABS-CBN, according to Moreno.

Replacements

"I know that these members, which are only made of cardboard, may not survive the typhoon season," said Moreno. "But I am hoping to convince the stars themselves to have their own statues made to replace the wooden."

Showbiz bosses and fellow stars, two of the stars who graced the occasion, earlier signified their interest in doing just that, Moreno added.

Even before the Paradise of Stars, the Mowelfund compound had long been a popular local tourist attraction and destination for school children on excursion trips.

During peak seasons, as many as 14 bus loads of tourists and school children come, said Mowelfund executive director Rosa Susana Ilan.

"We give lectures on film appreciation," said Antero Ilan. "We also have film showings that encourage children to appreciate movies."

There have been a source of income for Mowelfund, which has been cash-strapped lately, even if its share from the proceeds of the annual Metro Manila Film Festival runs increased from 20 to 25 percent last year, it used to be the festival's one beneficiary.

Annual expenses

"We need at least P3.5 million a year for operational expenses," said Antero Ilan.

The Mowelfund has 4,500 members—2,500 of them honorary members who are exempt from paying the P500 annual dues.

"Most of the members are not top earners in the industry," said Antero Ilan. "Items can't even pay the dues, so we have to help them update their accounts so they can avail of the benefits."

Traditionally, the Mowelfund editors health and death benefits, though the amounts have been slashed due to lack of funds.

Last year, Mowelfund's share from the MMFF pie came to only P4.2 million.

Income from tours

Antero Ilan told Inquirer Entertainment that the Paradise of Stars will enhance the attraction of Mowelfund as a local tourist destination and a movie industry landmark, generating income from the "tourists."

The Paradise of Stars is an extension of the Mowelfund Museum, which occupies two floors of the Mowelfund building.

The building houses movie memorabilia since 1997, when the Spaniards brought motion pictures to the Philippines as a new form of entertainment. It also has a film archives and library.

An annex houses the Hill Hall and Hall of National Artists for film.

Preserving a heritage

"Only someone like Rizza Grenes could pull this off," said Antero Ilan, referring to the Paradise of Stars.

Moreno even had a theme song, "Ito Ang Aking Ito," composed by Ryan Fontanilla.

He said he hoped more stars would help in preserving the heritage of local movies.

"This might not bring the movie industry back to life," said Moreno, "but it would make the younger generation aware that once upon a time, we made movies that reflected our culture as a people. If only for that, we should preserve the memories that local movies, as an entertainment medium, has given us through several decades."

THAT'S entertainment! The walk of stars is an extension of the Mowelfund Museum in terms of preserving RP's movie heritage.

FELITA Corrales in a party mood

CATCHING UP Colin Rodriguez and Marivilla Nera Perez Macias

MARVIN AGUSTIN

ANGELI LOCSIN

Marvin denies part in Angel-Oyo breakup

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

EVEN IF MARVIN AGUSTIN IS lovelorn at the moment, love is still in everything he does. He's an all-heart guy whether he's doing on his curios, supervising his mom stuff or portraying a cole.

That brand is now under construction. So there's no truth to talk pinpointing him as the cause of the alleged lawsuit and Oyo Boy battle split-up.

He sighs. "Hindi naman kay tini. We're both recovering pa from a breakup. Our hearts both still need to heal."

Or is he just wary of falling for a younger woman again like his ex, Pauleen Luna? "I don't have a certain age preference naman. Love just hits me."

Marvin is off to Bangkok with Angel and Sharon to shoot for their yap-rating "Asian Treasures." But his real treasure are his two sons. "Any time morning nais 'nanon ang mukha ko sa bintana, 'Daddy, I love you.' Then I'm fine, I pick them up from their mom's place. We have a cool arrangement. Kasama? Wala ang TV when they are on the screen."

Marvin has really embraced fatherhood. It's his reward for living well and loving true.

Cager danger

Rudy Mar Quinto is pained that her ex-boyfriend, cager Rudy Hatfield, keeps dragging her name into his interviews.

"I hope he and his fiancee will leave me in peace. They have apologized but I really get bad heart when he's mashed me, saying he will expose everything about our past on TV. Out of respect for the ex which we were together, I hope he shuts up. I was devastated when we broke up. Di naman ako nagpa-panic. Nasaktan talaga ako to the point na na-inspired pa nga ako!

"But I'm thankful to tell na 'cause when I was still with him, si kanya ang sender niyan. Now with Erik Hamlet, I am gross. Erik is such a kind soul. With him, I can do things I never thought I could do before."

Mr. Battlebelt is not just moving on. She's moving up!

Swellhead!

Could it be true that Stella Films' first choice for the lead role in "Silip" was Alfred Vargas but they supposed Pelo Barreiro insisted 'cause Alfred had become swellheaded and refused to renew his contract? I sensed Alfred was faithful the lover but he hasn't replied.

I've known him since his dozen-chips Fame hasn't changed him a bit. Maybe he just has other priorities now. His home studio saved the way for him, but there comes a time in every actor's career when he must shift directions in order to stay in the race.

Asia's Nightingale

Manila has named Asia's Nightingale Lani Misalucha. She's now based in Vegas where she wows audiences at the Flamingo night after night. Watch her in "Shining Star" on March 17 at the Big Dome. Joining her are Brendan Dy, Rina Marcelo and Gary Bahandoman. For tickets, call 9113888.

Unlike most divas, Lani does not need to get all flashy to be classy. She's a charmer too unjaded.

Lani says, "I see no reason why other singers should be insecure about me. How strange the notion that Regine and I have a gap. I'm inviting her to watch my concert."

For the first time, Lani will realize a dream. "Babalik ang mga sayaw ko at concert! My fantasy number ako! I will also do a 'Dreamgirls,' [Barbra] Streisand medley."

She says she died to meet one of her idols, Gladys Knight. "I was speechless when she sent backstage after watching my show."

As our "Nightingale" nears high-notching shows, it's good to know she hasn't lost sight of her roots, where she is irreplaceable.

Top model

Solar Entertainment and RPG 9 present "Philippines' Next Top Model," a reality TV series every Tuesday at 8:30 p.m. (Starts) by the ravishing Raffa Gutierrez-Reiss, the show features challenges that the candidates will battle, from daily chores to rigorous training from actual fitness shot 24/7.

The winner gets a contract with Stars' modeling agency in Hong Kong, P500,000 in cash, and a south sea pearl necklace — among other fab prizes. Strike a pose and strike gold!

Love Spell

Love drives on the dance floor this March in "Love Spell's" "Hanes Ko Po, Hanes Ko Day"—seven females after "Your Song"? It features the Ultimate Dance 4 members Shaina Magdayao, Kaycee Cruz, Maja Salvador and John Prats.

In this love story with a magical twist, what will happen when the two dancing lolbs learn love sigh challenge in the middle of their dance?

Are good looks really important in choosing a partner? Johnson says, "Of course it all starts with physical attraction. But that should not be the sole basis of a relationship. Beauty fades. It's character that counts."

Oh yeah! We can't change people, we love. We can only unlock them.

Gay pageant

Glamorosity Entertainment presents the very first Mr. Gay Philippines on March 17, 7 p.m. at Amvibay Bicol tonight. There are Mr. Filipinas Universe 2002 Ramon Agustin and Bread Earners. The winner will vie for the title Mr. Gay International in the US. For tickets, call 6362809/6298923.

Gay Pride... they wear it well!

Photo and Save

Some things are worth repeating. Like the sold-out "Abrakadabra" concert of Pinoy Pancreas and Kuya Billy. If you missed their sensational 9 day show, catch them on March 17 at the Mike Theatre. For tickets, call 9113888.

Hoax is overwhelmed that he has conquered the concert stage as well. "Acting is my first love. Singing is a bonus from God. I still can't believe I have records," he exclaims.

If JV had to choose, what would he give up? "If I could have it my way, I wouldn't want to give up both. Acting gives me a chance to portray different personality differ ent characters. Singing takes me to places where I can reach out to more individuals."

His "national anthem" is 112's "All I Want is You." And that's exactly what Jess and Pedro's diehard fans are chanting. Even if they're singing for the 4th time, those two "Enjoying Heaven" never sound like a broken record.

E-mail: [illegible]

Give us more Rae and Blunt

LEA SALONGA

WE'RE DIFFICULT NOT MANY J. Rhye fans. "Grammy nominees 2001" (Sony BMG) is out and we don't mind saying our opened ship all the time from the opening track, Gerald Baldrey's "Crazy," which is assuring for its heart-changing love, to Graham Bailey Rae's "Put Your Records On."

Don't you just love this girl? At first we thought she sounded like a love angel. Akala Alanis. Then we got it a color Nikki Gee heard. Which means the melody is catchy—and the lyrics are dope. Mon...dear.

In last year's collection, "Grammy Nominees 2000," our favorite "discoveries" were Randi Thanx and Jack Johnson. This year, to get us be Rae and James Blunt. Until we saw him perform on the last Grammy Awards ceremonies, we kept only an ear to this world-beating chap. Now we're eager to beat the whole package.

Spiral from Rae, Blunt and Barkley, the other surprise hosts in this package are Dixie Chicks' "Not Ready to Make Nice" of course, Justin Timberlake's "Senyorita", Bar3 for Cub Zippers' "Sunrise/Sunset" and Death Cab for Cutie's "I Will Follow You Into the Dark." There's John Legend's "Save Room" and Alan Jackson's "Where Is the World is Change," too.

SPIN CITY

Lea on MYX today

Lea Salonga may be in Broadway right now, playing Kristine in the newly-reviving musical "Miss Saigon," but fans can catch her tonight at 9 on MYX, in the music channel's 120, Sky Cable's feature/artist.

MYX Presents: Lea Salonga" showcases the internationally acclaimed artist as she performs cuts from her latest album, "Inspired" (Sony BMG), like "Waiting for Love," "Land of the Loving," the Jim Steinman composition "In Hear Me Say You Love Me" and the current single "Promise Me" originally by Beverly Craven.

Lea is accompanied by The Global Studio Orchestra conducted by her brother, young maestro Ernesto Salonga. "Inspired," the product of their collaboration between the siblings, is Lea's first studio album in seven years. It reached gold status within three weeks of its release.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Why Antonella is disappointed

By Kathryn Farinas Reyes

ANTONELLA BARBA

JARED COTTER, SUNDANCE HEAD AND Vanessa Hudgens all hit the lead about getting the boot on "American Idol" last week, and therefore not making it to the Top 12. Controversial semi-finalist Antonella Barba was disappointed about something else.

Antonella, who has been the subject of controversy on account of her sexy photos on the Internet, said in a recent conference call (made possible by mobile phone) that the judgefest were [illegible] and said with [illegible] her concern.

"But all the stuff was completely irrelevant to the fact that I was in the show to sing," the 20-year-old Cindy Crawford look-alike explained.

"That wasn't the way I intended to convey myself," the New Jersey girl said of the photos. "I would rather promote myself in a more classy way."

She quickly added, however, that she wasn't opposed to taking up acting or modeling offers.

JARED COTTER

How do you feel about getting eliminated?

I feel shocked, more. It was overdisappointing. I never expected to go home this early.

Do you think the votes were biased on singing talent alone?

Definitely not.

What are you planning to do now?

I have to wait a few months before I get a deal, but there are definitely things on the horizon. I could say I'm as well, as I'm going to stay in L.A. for a few more weeks.

Who you were looking forward to working with among the show's scheduled guests?

Quincy Jones. I wanted to see what comments he'd have for me, even criticisms.

What are you going to miss most about "Idol"?

The celebrity that one gains by doing this show. It's intense and it's a lot of fun. Good, I'm just going to miss everybody.

ANTONELLA BARBA

How hard was it to have to deal with all of the criticism things going on around you, or you centered doing in the show?

It was definitely difficult. I tried to block it out as much as possible and stay focused on the work.

SUNDANCE HEAD

From page F2

panitos.

Some of the judges' comments on your singing weren't flattering. What was it like for you to stand there and hear them?

It's difficult to be put down, especially on national television. Mean as to be told that you're not good when you're made it this far, and you know that you've earned it.

SABRINA SLOAN

JAMES COTTER

Stephanie Edwards, said the thought of you as her best friend. What did it mean to each other before you left?

I'm so happy for her. I knew she was going to make it. We actually both thought that we would both make it.

How did you prepare yourself mentally to perform and to not be distracted by the media chaos?

Sometimes you get that nervous feeling in your stomach. The vocal coach told me, "Don't mistake that for nerves, turn that energy into passion energy." If you can turn nerves into passion energy, that will lead your performance, you can just have fun with it.

SABRINA SLOAN

The judges were shocked when you were eliminated. What went through your mind?

I was shocked, too. Hadn't prepared myself for going home... purely because of the judges saying I deserved to be in the Top 12. (Maybe! Sometimes thought I was safe and they didn't need to see).

What do you see yourself doing next?

Singing and performing, absolutely. That's my passion. I really've got out an album, for sure.

What kind of album?

Something like ... I like Corinne Bailey Rae a lot.

Is there one person you would most like to see win "Idol"? now?

Melinda is obviously great ... she's a great person inside and out.

What are you going to miss most about "Idol"?

Performing. That first week on the doors was incredible ... a total rush.

SUNDANCE H&AD

How has your experience been on Idol?

Wonderful! I'm thankful that I got to work with so many professionals. They taught me a lot.

Do you think you're going to continue with music?

Absolutely. As soon as I get back home, I'm going to start working on a record.

What do you think happened?

I'm not really sure. [Maybe] America considered me to be safe and didn't need the votes. So, still in a bit of a shock.

What were you most looking forward to working with?

Definitely Shaz, just to be in the same room with that guy would be an honor.

How hard was it being away from your family while you were on "Idol"?

I'm a very emotional guy, it was hard being away from my family. My dad, he's only three months old, and I missed out. The last time I saw him, he couldn't do anything, but sleep and eat. Now he smiles, he laughs. He moves around, he crawls. He holds his head up, and he's figuring out what his hands are.

Everybody was sad about you leaving. Sanjaya was almost embraced for you to stay on.

Sanjaya Malakar is just a kid. But he's got a great talent. He just wants to grow, learn about himself and be confident.

What are you going to miss most about "Idol"?

Jose Serafini [laughs]. They treated everyone like stars ... "American Idol" is a first-class organization. I'm very proud to have been part of an elite group.

"American Idol" airs on the Fox Channel Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 8 p.m. live on satellite, with replays at 9 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.

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DREAMGIRLS

BECAUSE I SAID SO

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MTRCB PG-13

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Her mom shops for her food.
Shops for her clothes.
Now, she's shopping for her date.

BECAUSE I SAID SO

NOW SHOWING

Fab Four lives on: Area One and Apple Band

THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE way the melody and lyrics are fused in the songs of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr that makes them still make a stand in the hearts of listeners after more than 40 years.

Whatever the reasons behind the timelessness of The Beatles' songs, the members of Area One, one of the most popular three-man band bands today, are only too glad to drink from our shared Saturday at Mesh's Bar Bistro in Makati City.

Area One front man Alex Lerma, who exuded his signature style for a 12-string acoustic guitar from Japan, tells Inquirer Entertainment in an interview that he grew up listening to The Beatles, and learned to love the deceptively simple and catchy tunes.

He shared this love with neighbor Gab Bangalang, whom he grew up with in Tondo, Manila's communities in the UP Diliman campus called Area 1, and they would sing the songs to their heart's content.

"They were so easy to learn and sing, and I believe most musicians who followed were influenced by those marvelous Timeless songs.

But it was not until April of 2004 that John and Gab, who were then enrolled public, got together and were hard to their first love—The Beatles' songs.

Soon to join their own "Eat Bulaga" dimme Bert de Leon, they an earnest Beatlemaniac who couldn't find an ear to his passion until John and Gab came knocking on his door.

They started practicing, honing and refining their skills and soon, Area One was born.

Since 2004, Area One has performed at the Hard Rock Café in Makati City numerous times and at Mesh's Bar. They are also popular performers at private parties and corporate events.

Area One held its own at Fort Bonifacio's Global City.

Lerma, who, Gab and Bert on bass, play guitarist Ray Mendigoza, drummer Dario Santos and keyboard player Carlo Cruz for a full band

Munching ears three acts for other bands out there that can easily sing The Beatles' songs, simply as they are different is that they grow up with the Beatles and they love it with a passion.

Thea A. Bautista

The Apple Band

"The Beatles Forever With The Apple Band" is a three-night engagement by Show Ohlol Productions and George Hamers, Band Stark Café, Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila—folks at the Hard Rock Café in Makati City at 7:30 p.m. on March 23.

The group will also play at the IMTV Bar, also in Makati City, on March 22.

The music series features Beatles' hit songs as performed by The Apple Band—David Leon as John Lennon, Ryan Cayabyab as Paul McCartney, David Brighton as George Harrison and Mike Bacillio as Ringo Starr.

The performances will be highlighted by a major concert at the Aliw Theater in Pasay City on March 23 at 8 p.m. and end with a dinner-concert at Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila at 7 p.m. on March 25.

Call 891-9999 or 893-4661 to 64.

Film board: RP movies grew ...

From page 11

the ability to produce films of greater quality ... Because of the market by Philippine films has changed remarkably."

He said the Inquirer: "Moviegoers expect producers to churn out high-quality products because of the ticket prices. Moreover, the FDCP's survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations, showed that over 60 percent of the movie-going public are high school graduates. They are more demanding. Local movies no longer cater to the audience crowd. From the D-E crowd, local films should now be [illegible] A, B."

Bigger challenge

Alfonzo Bowd said that the previous five-year decline in the profitability of local movies could be attributed to the producers' failure to adapt to the changing market. "They continued to produce low-quality films, but kept upping ticket prices. It's like selling Rolex products in Mabuhay prices," he said.

The bigger challenge now, Alfonzo admitted, was to recover local companies' competitiveness vis-à-vis foreign mainstream films. "We should work to our old market share. Local films used to have almost 50 percent market share, in terms of total box office receipts. Last year, we gained only 25 percent."

He observed, "Out of the 61 local films produced last year, 41 were submitted to the Movies Rating Board for grading, and 32 were graded. Incredible—22 fit and fine As." It graded movies are given 100-percent assessment tax rebate, B-films, 60 percent.

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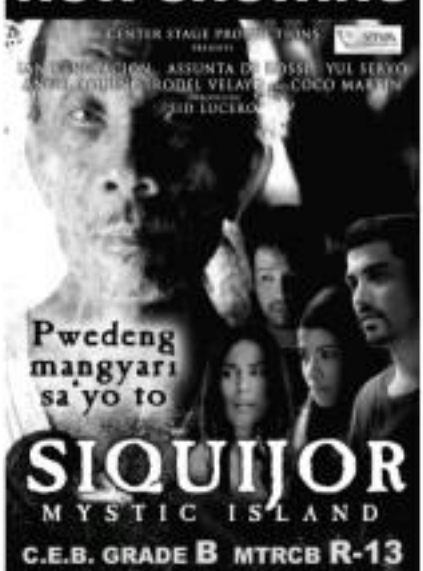

Young stars take over

ESTABLISHED FILM STARS HAVE taken in worry. Of the new movies being viewed over the viewers' enjoyment and patronage during the first quarter of 2007, most top-bill new talents. Take a look at the cast lists:

"Siete el Love," Christopher de Leon, Angel Aquino, Benidict Bote, Alfred Vargas, Julianna Palermo.

"The Promise," Richard Gutierrez, Angel Locsin.

"You Got Me," Iwa Moreno, Sam Milby, Empire Morales.

"Happy Hearts," Rayver Cruz, Shaina Magdayao, Bantom Padilla.

In these films' stellar lists, only a few established veteran leads like Christopher and Ramon manage to hold on to the marquee, to the competitive company of many more young top-billers like Richard, Angel, Iwa, Sam, Empire, Rayver and Shaina.

While we salute that experienced stars can still draw crowds if they top-bill fresh and creative projects, we must admit that youth is still what sells in the 2007 film market. That isn't necessarily a bad thing, because youth can mean vitality, topicality, pertinence and even interest.

Sadly, however, young talents in these parts are chosen mainly for their looks, so some of them are deficient in talent and the right attitude and work ethic.

Many new discoveries also lack a distinct look, personality and charisma, so they don't really stand out. Quite a number of them are now being discovered in TV talent shows where viewers do the voting, resulting in some superficial and therefore poor choices.

Even when the young stars are proven hitmakers, they're sometimes rushed into roles too challenging for them, as in the case of Richard Gutierrez and Angel Locsin in "The Promise," or their performances come off as inadequate and "too big-enough."

Older and more experienced young-adult stars should have escaped those roles, but most of them don't have the crowd-drawing power of the Richard-Angel love team, so there you go...

Since young hunk are the current trend, producers deeply have to come up with fresh projects that are right for them.

At the same time, they should continue developing new star's charge skills by way of rigorous workshops, so that their stellar vehicles won't end up as a series of shallow, puerile and predictable teen romps that quickly lose their ability to attract and excite moviegoers teen-using them.

As for our experienced stars, we urge producers to also come up with well-conceptualized projects for them. It would be a waste of good talent if they were merely shunted off into cameos or supporting bits.

We know that producers need to keep an eagle eye on the financial bottom line, but talent is a resource that shouldn't be wasted in any fifty roles, or made to die on the vine due to neglect.

The healthiest film industries are those that come up with movies for all age categories and preferences, and even niche markets must be served. Talented young stars are welcome, but their popularity shouldn't mean the extinction of their elders and betters!

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Sadly, these new talents are chosen mainly for their looks, so some of them are deficient in skill, work ethic and right attitude

FEEDBACK

Real critic

From Ronald To
ronaldto_twin@yahoo.com

For Nestor Torre:
Now you are talking as a real movie critic should. Acting is not all about industrious mannerisms but more about natural emotion. Ayn being the relative in the end. They are used by true thespians for dull. I say would-be thespians like Kim Chiu in their repertoire in their craft.

For minors

From Julius Agasen
tagasen@yahoo.com
2042 E. Brookwood Ct., Phoenix, AZ, USA

Cpt. Dra Gramco handle a show that would tackle family and moral values! Almost half of the Philippine populace are members of our race, according to Mr. Gramco herself and this subject should benefit [them]. Show biz in the Philippines has become more and more like Hollywood, where divorce and having multiple partners are widespread practices. Unfortunately these are seen largely accepted as just another way of life.

Loved it!

From Lorie Sirinkes
lsirinkes@aol.com

For Ruben Nepales: I just have to tell you how much I loved your interview with Gerard Butler. You asked him some really fabulous questions and I thank you. You truly must have a way of drawing people out, because he was very candid in his replies to you.

I have been a big fan of Gerry's since "Phantom of the Opera," one of my all-time favorite movies...and now one of my all-time favorite movie stars. I really believe no one else could have played the "Phantom" better than Gerry did, and it should have been a bigger success.

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5 PATHFINDER
6 DREAMGIRLS
7 SYQUIJOR

METRO EAST

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2 PATHFINDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 300
7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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3 HAPPY HEARTS
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ANGELES

1 EPIC MOVIE
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 300
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO

IMUS

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2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME
6 THE HITCHER

STARMILLS

1 EPIC MOVIE
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 300
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 YOU GOT ME
6 THE NUMBER 23

BACOLOD

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2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 HANNIBAL RISING
5 FLUSHED AWAY
6 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES

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By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

IT'S EASY TO LIKE "DREAMGIRLS," writer-director Bill Condon's big-screen translation of the '80s Broadway hit, which centers on the bustling music careers and soon-foiled ambitions of pioneering African-American radio stars. Set in Detroit during the '60s, the film is a revealing look at the machinations and quintessential dealings behind this aspect of show biz. The film's song and classic melodies also provide an exciting escape while allowing for moving personal themes.

Like the Supremes

It's about the rags-to-riches story of the Dreamettes, an aspiring Supremes-like group which discovers firsthand that success in the business isn't without compromises. The young veterans—Deena Jones (Beyoncé Knowles), Lorrell Robinson (Anika Noni Rose) and Effie White (Jennifer Hudson)—are given a break by a sneaky car salesman, Curtis (Jamie Foxx), who's not beyond rigging talent shows and taking advantage of underage Effie. Thanks to him, however, the Dreamettes soon land a gig with rising rock and roll performer James "Thunder" Early (Eddie Murphy), a James Brown-Little Richard hybrid.

With Curtis as their new manager, the women tread the tricky road to super-stardom and must evolve constantly to continue selling records. Given Curtis' opportunistic nature and the group's newest, professional and personal relationships soon blur, which naturally affects the whole group. Effie, the most straightforward of the three, naturally speaks her mind when things don't go her way. This sparks a feud—a commonplace occurrence with rising music groups—that soon forces her to go on a different path.

Hudson, recent Oscar supporting actress winner, memorably portrays Effie. The erstwhile "American Idol" contestant captivates in numbers that cajole her to become the embodiment of the Motown diva, especially with her soulful, heartfelt rendition of "And I Am Telling You (I Am Not Going)."

Frenchers, it will be interesting to see if she have just as well with roles that don't require her to sing. But Effie is like a force of nature here.

The other cast members don't disappoint, either. Breakout as the frizzy Nine-ish songstress Deena effortlessly gives a defined contrast to her friend-turned-rival and superdiva Effie. And there's Murphy, of course, who gives the grinning, gyrating fairly a mesmerizing milestone, as well as a tender, desperate side. He struggles to an artist are quite relevant, he eventually breaks free of the mundane pop material by performing a "message song" reflective of the era's militant and political upsurges.

Pleasurable experience

Failing at becoming an inspiring force, he succumbs to his weaknesses, just as some stars who can't survive without the adulation. Meanwhile, Foxx's serious portrayal of Curtis, whose growth as a well-connected controlling manager, is quite commendably mapped.

Such believable transformations and interactions, together with adeptly performed song numbers, definitely help make "Dreamgirls" an unusually pleasurable and sweetening experience.

AT THE CINEMAS

G1	1 HAPPY HEARTS	2 300	3 SQUIDBOY: MYSTIC ISLAND	4 PATHFINDER			
G4	1 BECAUSE I SAID SO	2 PATHFINDER	3† DREAMGIRLS				
	4 NOTES ON A SCANDAL	5 THE DOG SHEPHERD	6 300	7 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS			
GB1	1 300	2 BECAUSE I SAID SO					
GB3	1† DREAMGIRLS	2† 300					
	3 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	4 PATHFINDER	5 BECAUSE I SAID SO				
ATC	1† 300	2 DREAMGIRLS					
	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO	4 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	5 PATHFINDER				
ACC	1 300	2 BECAUSE I SAID SO	3 THE DOG SHEPHERD	4 EPIC MOVIE			
M2	1 HAPPY HEARTS	2 SQUIDBOY: MYSTIC ISLAND					
	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO	4 300	5 PATHFINDER				

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